



Voluntourism, othering and commodification; a case study in St Lucia and surrounding communities, South Africa



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SDC-80436 MSc Thesis Sociology of Development and Change

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October 2018



Preface

In my life voluntourism, has crossed my path several times. I have been a volunteer tourist myself in 2012, where I did a three-week volunteer project in Indonesia with sea turtles, in my summer break between high school and university. I have to admit that this volunteer project was placed on my CV for a long time, under the heading experiences, until recently when I removed it. Unconsciously I felt kind of uncomfortable having it on my CV as a Master student International Development, as this experience triggered a more critical look towards voluntourism projects.

Not only did I actively look for voluntourism projects, they were also promoted at the university. In my second year of my Bachelor and in my first year of my Master, AEISEC Wageningen (AIESEC, 2018) gave a presentation on their projects abroad, during my lecture. I remember the first time I saw the presentation, I was so enthusiastic and passionate afterwards, that I immediately looked up the website to see if I could do one of the volunteer projects. However, this enthusiasm was not present at all during the second time I saw the presentation. I felt sorry and a sort of vicarious shame for the poor guy on stage trying to convince critical International Development Master students that you can make a positive impact on our world by doing a global volunteer tourism project with AIESEC. I have to admit we were in a lecture on critical reflections and research in international development, which might have influenced our cynical mind.

There are several people I would like to thank, without their input and support, this thesis would not have been possible.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Stasja Koot for his enthusiasm about the research topic and his many great ideas. Your guidance kept me enthusiast and critical and helped me use my capacities to the fullest.

Secondly, I would like to thank the staff and volunteers of African Impact, and especially Lindsey Dively, for welcoming me with open arms. I really enjoyed my time volunteering with African Impact and I appreciated the critical engagement and input for my thesis. Without the volunteer house filled with amazing volunteers and hardworking staff, my experience in St Lucia would have been less exciting and definitely lonelier.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my mother. Not only for coming to visit me in South Africa and see and hear firsthand what I was experiencing, and for triggering and supporting my love for Africa. But also for reading and re-reading my thesis while checking for dyslectic mistakes.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends who lived in the Lebo library with me the last couple of months. Without these endless coffee breaks and mental support sessions, I would not have survived in this 'bunker'.

Abstract

This thesis studies the host-guest interactions within voluntourism in St Lucia, South Africa. In St Lucia, three voluntourism organisations are situated; African Impact, VESA and Reach Out Volunteering (ROV), which work in the three surrounding communities; Khula, Ezwenalish and Dukuduku. Three months of ethnographic fieldwork has been done between March 2018 and June 2018 that included 34 interviews with important actors within voluntourism. The main objective of this thesis is answering the following research question: How do othering and commodification affect host-guest perspectives on each other and on the development discourse in social voluntourism projects in St Lucia, South Africa? Three overarching concepts have been used to analyse the host-guest interactions; othering, development discourse and commodification. The thesis shows that voluntourists and host communities have several perspectives on each other. Voluntourists often have a poor but happy interpretation of the host community, and the host community often see the voluntourists as actual doctors, these interpretations influence the way they interact with each other. This thesis shows that voluntourists projects create a publicly accepted 'methodology' of doing development, by using a particular development discourse. Important elements of this development discourse is that development can be done without specific skills and development is done for the 'needy other'. Voluntourism is a highly marketable commodity, because it combines the moral achievement of 'making a difference' with the emotional reward of close encounters with the host community. Since it is such a marketable commodity, new profit driven actors have entered the field. There is a big difference in the way the voluntourism organisations present themselves towards the volunteers; African Impact represent themselves as a company, while VESA represents themselves as a NGO and ROV represents themselves as a charity. Therefore, the divide between a company and NGO within voluntourism is paper-thin. This thesis concludes with a call for further research on voluntourism and the way it is shaped by market mechanisms.

Key words: voluntourism; othering; development discourse; commodification; St Lucia; South Africa

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List of abbreviations

AI	African Impact
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ROV	Reach Out Volunteering
VESA	Volunteer Eco Students Abroad
WUR	Wageningen University

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1. Introduction

Rain was pouring down, while we were heading back to the volunteer house for lunch. The car was warm and dry, and packed with three volunteers and the medical coordinator. We were discussing what we were having for lunch, and how hungry we were after going to project. On my lap, I held the clinic box, which contained a small booklet in which I recorded the number of patients I saw that morning, 63 in total. The other two volunteers had been on the nutrition project, handing over nutritious 'Epap' (a porridge with added nutrients) to community members who were assigned to that project. While we were driving through puddles filled with water, we saw several children going home from school, their school uniforms soaking wet. However when they saw us in the car, they put on a huge smile and waved at us with a lot of enthusiasm. At one point one of the volunteers said; "All the children living here are so happy, compared to the children back home. Even if they have to walk to school and get washed away, they seem happier than the children in Belgium."

VIGNETTE 1 ADOPTED FROM FIELD NOTES ON 21-04-2018

1.1 Voluntourism the background

In the last ten to fifteen years, the popularity of voluntourism projects has increased tremendously (Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Swan, 2012). Voluntourism projects are springing up like mushrooms all over the world, like the voluntourism project in St Lucia, South Africa, described in the vignette above. This increase in popularity has changed the face of volunteer tourism, as commercial operators and companies driven by profit have entered the scene (Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Before entering a discussion on voluntourism and its facets, it is necessary to clarify and grasp what is meant by this term. The most cited definition of voluntourism is the definition of Wearing & McGehee (2013), who define voluntourism as "Those tourists who for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve the aiding or alleviating of material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environment, or research into aspects of society or the environment." Jakubiak & Smagorniski (2016) add to this definition that it is a short-term alternative form of travel and emphasize that the volunteers are unskilled. Tomazos & Cooper (2012) highlight that volunteers often pay to do volunteer work in developing countries.

Voluntourism is regularly presented as a new alternative moral form of tourism (Gray & Campbell, 2017), as the voluntourists role is to fulfil the local needs. Alternative forms of tourism are driven by demands to include sustainability and participation and therefore eventually to do less harm to the host communities (Pastran, 2014). Wearing & McGehee (2013) highlight positive motives for voluntourism; like altruism, self-development, cultural immersion, having the experience of living in another country and participating in the 'development' of a community. Voluntourism is also presented as a way of experiencing a more 'authentic' Africa than regular tourists experience, as it is opt that they enter the 'back region' of the host community (Swan, 2012). By entering the back region, it is meant that the voluntourists encounter the host community during the time they relax, and prepare for their performance for the front region (Cohen, 1988). For a long time scholars have addressed the positive motives for voluntourism, however critics in the public media and academics also started questioning the effectiveness and benefit of voluntourism.

Scholars like McGloin & Georgeou (2015), Pastran (2014) and Sin (2009) have opened up discussion to investigate the pitfalls of voluntourism. One critique of voluntourism is that it is seen as a new form of colonialism, as it reinforces unequal power relations and age-old cultural stereotypes between voluntourists and their hosts (Pastran, 2014). In this way, the poor host community is being positioned as the 'other' and in desperate need of assistance (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). It is also stated that it creates another layer of dependency between the 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' world, as the rich

and better off provide aid or 'development' to the poor and seemingly worse off (Sin, 2009). This dependency is established, as the flow of travel remains one sided, going from the developed north to the underdeveloped south (Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2016). Questions have also been asked on the 'authenticity' of the voluntourism experience, are the volunteers really entering the 'back region' or is it just staged authenticity (Cohen, 1988). Staged authenticity appears in places designed for tourist to make them believe in the authenticity of these experiences (MacCannell, 1973).

Voluntourism can possibly be a problem for the host community. One problem is that the volunteers are often unskilled and untrained; this could possibly lead to exploitation of the host community (Henry, 2016). This might be an outcome of volunteers possessing a strong western perception of development, which could disrupt local economies and eventually have negative effects on yearlong work of legitimate development agencies (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Yet another problem for the local host community related to voluntourism, is that they often lack ownership and they do not have authority over the volunteers, which might lead to the volunteers creating their own hours, routines and expectations (Henry, 2016).

There are numerous actors involved in voluntourism, including the volunteer participants (the guests), the local host community (the hosts) and the voluntourism organisations (Liston-Heyes & Daley, 2016). This host-guest interaction between the volunteers and the host community lies at the basis of my thesis.

Voluntourism is a phenomenon that is happening all over the world, where people from developed countries, go to developing countries to do volunteer work. South Africa is in the top four countries that receives the most voluntourists (Kass, 2013). Voluntourism can be found throughout the country. From volunteering with penguins at the Cape Peninsula, to volunteering in townships in Cape Town, to volunteering with the 'big five' in Kruger national park. A distinction can be made between two types of voluntourism, on the one hand conservation voluntourism and on the other hand social voluntourism. Conservation voluntourism implies that volunteers travel from their home country to support wildlife conservation, to do research and work in rehabilitation projects (Nisbett & Strzelecka, 2017). Social voluntourism implies that the volunteers work with local people and host communities, rather than with animals. This thesis examines social voluntourism in St Lucia and its surrounding communities.

1.2 Voluntourism in St Lucia

The village of St Lucia is situated in the North East of South Africa, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and located within the iSimangaliso Wetlands Park (Nustad, 2015), some 250 km or a 3 hour drive from major capital Durban (Ngcoya, 2015). Because of the unique landscape and vegetation, the iSimangaliso Wetlands Park received the first South African title of a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1999 (Nustad, 2011; Nustad, 2015). The intention of the UNESCO world cultural heritage list is to encourage conservation, but in the end, it also serves as a tool to boost tourism (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). St Lucia was established in 1930 to cater tourists and angler, and still in 2018, it serves mainly as a tourist destination (Nustad, 2015). Because of the convenient location close to game reserves and the Indian Ocean, St Lucia is one of the major tourist destinations in the province of Kwazulu Natal (Ngcoya, 2015). Tourism plays such an important role in St Lucia that around 80% of the population living there is involved in Tourism (Field notes, 24-05-2018). The town itself has one main street, which contains several hostels, hotels, restaurants, bars and shops, and four smaller streets where several B&B's are located.

St Lucia's surrounding communities

Whilst the accommodations of all the voluntourism organisations are situated in St Lucia, their social volunteer work is conducted in the communities surrounding St Lucia. These communities are Khula, Dukuduku and Ezwenalisha. Khula is the biggest community and is inhabited by approximately 30.000 people. Dukuduku and Ezwenalisha both have around 20.000 inhabitants (Field notes, 12-03-2018). Most of the volunteer work is done in Khula. One of the reasons for this, is that the roads in Khula are more accessible. Secondly, Khula is the closest community to St Lucia, while driving to Khula takes only 15 minutes, driving to Ezwenalisha takes approximately 30 minutes.

The word Dukuduku translated into English means Dark Forest and the word Ezwenalisha translated means New World (Field notes, 12-03-2018). While Ezwenalisha and Khula both have mostly government houses, Dukuduku does not. As the name Dark Forest implies, it is an area with a lot of nature. Because of the considerable amount of nature, the government had decided to make a natural area of Dukuduku, and thus wanted to get rid of the people living there. By offering government houses in Ezwenalisha and Khula, the government hoped that the community members would move. However, the land the people would receive was much smaller, and therefore many people did not want to move and now live in shacks in Dukuduku (Field notes, 12-03-2018). Regarding health care facilities, Ezwenalisha and Khula have a clinic where people can go to if they are in need of medical support. In case a person needs to be transported to the hospital in Mtubatuba, a market town approximately 30 minutes away, the clinic in Khula can arrange the transportation.



FIGURE 1 SOUTH AFRICA AND ST LUCIA AREA (SOURCE GOOGLE MAPS, MODIFIED BY AUTHOR, 2018)

Even 24 years after the ending of Apartheid, is it still geographically very visible in the area of St Lucia. White people in general inhabit the town St Lucia, while black people, with some exceptions, inhabit the three surrounding communities. The obvious boundary is the river, which you have to cross to enter St Lucia. While owners of the tourism sector are often white and living in St Lucia, the people working for them are often black and living in the communities. Every morning taxi busses arrive at the St Lucia rank coming from the communities, packed with hospitality staff. This is a form of hyper-apartheid in tourism, where there is unjust racialization and socialization of wealth and poverty (Ngcoya, 2015).

All of the volunteers I have encountered during my time in the field were white and from different developed countries. With VESA volunteering the majority of the volunteers were from Canada and the United States and with African Impact the majority of the volunteers came from countries in Europe, like Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden, and some from the United States. There was an obvious gender gap within the voluntourism projects, as most of the volunteers were female. All of the volunteers I encountered with African Impact were female, and only a minority in VESA were male. One of the reasons why there were only female volunteers with African Impact was that the two projects in St Lucia are focused on care, which might be more connected to femininity. While in other locations of African Impact, there are more men, because the projects are more focussed on animals and sports, which might be more connected to masculinity (Field notes, 28-04-2018). VESA had projects that included construction, which might attract more male volunteers. In general, most voluntourists are between 18 and 30 years old, especially students who participate in a gap year are a large part of the total (Pastran, 2014). This was also the case with the organisations in St Lucia. With VESA the majority of the volunteers were freshman university students, aging from 18 to 23. Likewise, with African Impact almost all of the volunteers were younger than 21. In the following, paragraph the different voluntourism projects, which have been briefly addressed in this paragraph, will be discussed.

1.3 Projects in St Lucia

In St Lucia, three voluntourism projects are active. These projects are offered by African Impact (African Impact, 2018), VESA (VESA, 2018) and Reach Out Volunteering (ROV) (Reach Out Volunteering, 2018). Two of the projects offer exclusively social voluntourism. The third project offers conservation volunteering as well as social volunteering.

African Impact

The first project, African Impact, is a company offering voluntourism projects in 11 different countries in Africa. In 2004, the company was founded in St Lucia, where after the head office moved to Cape Town (Interview #26). The two projects offered in St Lucia are the “Orphan Day Care and Community Support, Zululand project”, which is focused on educational volunteering, and the “Rural Medical and HIV/AIDS awareness, Zululand project”, which is focused on medical volunteering (African Impact, 2018). In the education project the volunteers work in crèches (preschools for children under 5), and organize afternoon- and reading clubs. The medical projects contains several different aspects, where the volunteers work in the Khula clinic where they take vitals containing blood pressure, height and weight. There is also a physiotherapy project where the volunteers accompany an actual physiotherapist in the morning and in the afternoon, they do their own physiotherapy with the medical coordinator. With the nutrition project, the volunteers measure the weight and arm size of the people who are part of the nutrition project, and give them Epap. Another aspect are the support groups given in Ezwenalisha and Khula village, where the volunteers teach a lesson, on a subject the women asked for. Examples of subjects are breast cancer and asthma. The volunteers went to project from Monday until Friday, from 8:30 in the morning, until 16:00 in the afternoon, in the weekends the volunteers had free time.

On the first day of volunteering, the volunteers receive an induction. In the general induction they learn about African Impact self, and about local customs. In the specific induction about the education or medical project, they learn about the specific project, and what you can and cannot do on project. For example in the education project the volunteers are told that you are not allowed to have a lot of physical contact with the children, and with the medical project the volunteers are told briefly about several common diseases in the communities.

African Impact differs the most compared to the other two volunteer programs, as it is situated in St Lucia year round. Every two weeks new volunteers arrive, and have to stay for at least two weeks. During the three month observation, approximately 15 volunteers came and left. Three of the volunteers were interns who stayed at African Impact for three months, some stayed for one or two months and others stayed for only two weeks. Volunteers are recruited directly via African Impact or via agencies. Approximately 30 agencies are connected to African Impact. More than half of the volunteers coming through booked via an agency. The prices African Impact and the agencies offer for the same projects are different. For example, a two week project booked via African Impact is 949 Euro, the same project booked via the agency KAYA is 1285 euro (KAYA, 2018).

African Impact works with international staff as well as local staff. During the three month observation there were two international staff members, the business manager and the volunteer coordinator. The American business manager had a managing role and managed everything behind the scenes. The Dutch volunteer coordinator accompanied the volunteers on project and her role was to be a bridge between the volunteers and African Impact (Interview 7 & 14). African Impact employed four local staff members; a medical coordinator who accompanied the medical volunteers on project, a community coordinator who accompanied the education volunteers on project, and two cooks who cleaned the volunteer house as well.

The volunteers stay in a volunteer house in a former lodge on the main road of St Lucia. The living conditions are basic, with shared rooms with at least four beds and cold-water showers. The breakfast served is a continental breakfast, including bread and cereals. The lunch and dinner is prepared by the local staff, and contained western as well as local dishes.

VESA

The second voluntourism project is VESA. VESA stands for Volunteer Eco Students Abroad, and present themselves as a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) (interview #29). The organisation is situated in four different countries around the world; Fiji, Laos, Ecuador and South Africa, and has been operating since 2009. The head office is established in the United States.

VESA offers a package deal volunteer/adventure holiday in South Africa, called “Africa Unearthed”, where the volunteers first conduct six days of volunteering in the communities surrounding St Lucia, where after they have an adventure week where they go to national parks and to Swaziland (VESA, 2018). This adventure week can be extended by another week in Mozambique. The two week package deal costs 1885 Euro (VESA, 2018).

The volunteering is split into three different fields; conservation, construction and education. During the two days of conservation, the volunteers go one day to the crocodile centre and one day to the cheetah centre. In these conservation centres, they first receive a tour, where after they do volunteer work, which could include the building of benches or the cleaning of cages. Construction is also done for two days. During the observation time, the volunteers were building a house for a family of nine which needed wheelchair access. With education the volunteers work either in a school during the week, or in an ‘orphan’ day-care during the weekends. A tour leader would accompany the volunteers on every project. In total, there were six tour leaders, one on the crocodile centre, one on the cheetah centre, two on education and two on construction. Three tour leaders were international, coming from Canada and Spain. The other three tour leaders were local, two white South Africans from St Lucia, and one black South Africa from Khula village.

VESA recruits their volunteers by going to universities around the world and convince people to do a project with them (interview #29). Anyone can sign up for the projects, however VESA mainly focusses on students. That is why the projects are always in the student holidays, from November until February and from May until August. Thus, the volunteers are not in St Lucia year round as there is a gap between February and May, and from August until November.

The volunteers stay in a backpacker's hostel on the main road of St Lucia, and have access to a swimming pool, braai (BBQ) area and have to share a room with six other volunteers. This accommodation is on a walking distance from shops and restaurants. The breakfast served in the morning is a continental breakfast, and the lunch and dinner cooked by local staff, is often western.

Reach Out Volunteering

Reach Out Volunteering (ROV) is a voluntourism organisation which presents themselves as a charity, and their head office is situated in Australia. ROV offers several voluntourism projects in South America, East Asia and Africa. ROV offers three package deal volunteer holiday experiences in South Africa, the first one "African Safari" is a trip where the volunteers stay in a national park and learn how to track animals and take out non-indigenous plants. The second option, "African Experience" includes the national park week and a week in St Lucia, building crèches, kindergartens and orphanages. The third option "African Adventure" includes an extra adventure week in Mozambique besides the week in St Lucia and in the national park. The two-week "African Experience" option costs 1928 Euro (ROV, 2018).

Like VESA, ROV recruits their volunteers by sending recruiters to universities, thus their main target group are university students. The projects are built around student holidays, as they are in St Lucia from May until July, and from December until January. There is thus also a period where there are no ROV volunteers present in St Lucia. Each volunteer group has space for a maximum of 25 volunteers (interview #34). ROV has one international team leader and one local team leader, who accompanies the volunteers to all the projects.

There are huge differences between the three volunteer organisations, regarding price and the amount of volunteers. African Impact offers the 'cheapest' two-week volunteer project, however these prices differ if you book via an agency. VESA and ROV offer a more 'expensive' two-week project, however this projects also include tourism activities like going on safari or the cultural village in Khula. VESA hosted the biggest group of volunteers, with a maximum of 60 volunteers per group (interview #29), while ROV and African Impact had a maximum of 25 volunteers. Another difference between the organisations was the way they present themselves, VESA presents themselves as a NGO, ROV presents themselves as a charity and African Impact presents themselves as a company. The geographical area where the head office was situated also differed between the organisations. While ROV and VESA both are situated in developed countries, the head office of African Impact is in South Africa. On the other hand there are a lot of similarities between the organisations, as their accommodation was all in St Lucia on the main road, and most of the volunteers who participated were students between 18 and 25 from developed countries.

1.4 Problem statement

The popularity of voluntourism has only quite recently increased tremendously. Voluntourism is often the first and only way people encounter ‘development’ directly. This explosion of voluntourism supply and ‘development’ being encountered by ‘normal’ people, has led to a growth in the study of voluntourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). While a lot of the literature in the first years hailed the positive aspects of voluntourism, recently scholars have looked at the pitfalls of voluntourism. Because of the popularity of voluntourism, new commercial organisations have entered the market with a profit driven motivation. These new organisations, which differ a lot, compared to traditional volunteer organisations like Peace Corps. They differ in length of stay and in skills needed for the project (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). Some of the emerging questions in the field are on the development discourses voluntourists bring with them to the field. Pastran (2014) argues that this development discourse reinforces the unequal power relations and stereotypes between the voluntourists and their guests. What the effects are of this commodification and the development discourse implemented on the host community is been researched in this thesis.

Aim and relevance

The aim of this research is to find out what the host and guest interactions within voluntourism are. Questions asked include; How do the hosts and guests look at each other? What kind of images have they constructed of each other? What kind of development discourses are used within voluntourism? And how does this discourse affect the interaction between host and guest. This research builds upon arguments that have been made by authors like Wearing & McGehee (2013), Swan (2012), Cohen (1988) and Tomazos & Cooper (2011). I believe that in the existing literature on voluntourism in South Africa, there has not been enough sufficient work on the host-guest interaction, related to authenticity, othering and commodification. While there has been a lot of research done on the motivations of volunteers (Gray & Campbell, 2007; Sin, 2009), not as much literature has actually linked voluntourism to theories about othering, authenticity and commodification. Especially considering the popularity and scope of voluntourism organisations, it is important that further research will be done on this subject. This integration will therefore push the existing debate on voluntourism further and broaden the scope.

This research holds societal relevance because it contributes to a different understanding of voluntourism and the interaction between hosts and guests. By providing inside in-depth information on the way the development discourse is implemented and what kind of effects it has on the host guest interaction, it could improve the development discourse of the volunteer organisations. This research could also help voluntourists better critically understand the implementations of voluntourism, and help them choose what kind of voluntourism project they want to do, or if they want to do it at all. For young people volunteering has become an extremely popular way of traveling as it is often their first time in a developing country (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). By engaging more critically in the debate on voluntourism, the volunteers themselves could contribute to the improvement of voluntourism. This case study also provides specific information for the region of St Lucia, which can be important for the volunteer organisations, or anyone who is interested in voluntourism in the area of St Lucia. Not only does this research have societal relevance, it also has academic relevance, as it fills in the literature gap on voluntourism, othering and commodification. Wearing & McGehee (2013) called for more research on the commodification of voluntourism, and this thesis contributes to this call.

1.5 Research question

The aim of this thesis is to fill in the research gap in the existing literature on voluntourism, by answering the following question:

How do othering and commodification affect host-guest perspectives on each other and on the development discourse in social voluntourism projects in St Lucia, South Africa?

In order to answer and support the main question the following sub questions will be answered:

1. *What are the host and guest perspectives of each other? And how are they influenced by social voluntourism?*
2. *How do the voluntourists and the host community perceive the presented development discourse?*
3. *How is voluntourism being commodified?*

1.6 Structure of report

This thesis is built up in such a way that first the theoretical and conceptual background will be explain after which the contextual on the ground situation will be elaborated. The following chapter explains the research methodology used within this thesis. Thereafter the theoretical framework is presented, with theories, which have been the fundamentals for this thesis. After the theoretical framework, three chapters are presented which explain the empirical results. Chapter 4 elaborates on the theoretical concept othering, and how this is experienced by the host community and their guests. Chapter 5 elaborates on the development discourse used within voluntourism in St Lucia. Chapter 6 explains the theoretical concept commodification, and the way voluntourism and the host community are being commodified. The second to last chapter presents discussion points related to the findings presented in chapter 4, 5 and 6. The final chapter presents concluding remarks while answering the research question.

2. Research methodology

This chapter explains the methodology that is used within this thesis, by first elaborating on the research design, where after the methods are discussed. Thirdly, ethical considerations are addressed and lastly the strengths and limitations of this research are discussed.

2.1 Research approach

To answer the main question I have used an ethnographic qualitative case-study approach to analyse voluntourism in South Africa (Cousins et al., 2009). Corresponding to this approach, qualitative data collection methods have been used in this research, while employing numerous data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Using this method, issues will not be explored using only one lens, but rather via a variety of lenses (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Ethnographic research is different from other research methods because it tries to understand a phenomenon from the inside (Scheepers et al., 2005). I have chosen for a qualitative method, because this is suitable when answering questions, which are related to meanings, interpretations, and explanations, that people associate with different events (Gray & Campbell, 2007). This method is also convenient to investigate a special context of a particular phenomenon, such as voluntourism in St Lucia, South Africa (Gray & Campbell, 2007).

Each research method used within this thesis, has its limitations, however by making use of different data collection methods the credibility of the data is increased (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Multiple qualitative data collection methods have been used, including individual interviewing, participant observation, field notes and document analysis, in order to guarantee triangulation. The intention of triangulation in research is to use multiple aspects of research to enhance the design to increase the ability to interpret findings (Thurmond, 2001).

2.2 Methods

Four different methods have been used to conduct this ethnographic qualitative case-study. Desk research and discourse analysis have been conducted in the Netherlands, prior and after going on fieldwork. While in South Africa fieldwork has been conducted, using participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and field notes. The fieldwork lasted for three months between March and June 2018.

Desk research and discourse analysis

Desk research has been conducted prior to leaving for fieldwork, in order to explore the context and form an image how the field looks like. Desk research has also helped to engage with important concepts to be able to use them to collect correct fieldwork data. Literature of relevant case studies on voluntourism have been read, as well as specific case studies on the target area. Relevant literature was found by using different search engines, such as Google Scholar and the online library service of the Wageningen University. Data base searches were undertaken using phrases like “voluntourism”, “volunteer tourism”, “South Africa”, “St Lucia”, “Othering” and “development discourse”.

Not only academic papers have been important for the thesis, also online promotion materials of the voluntourism organisations have been analysed visually and discursively. In this way, a discourse analysis has been applied. A discourse analysis is an approach to analyse the manner in which individuals and institutions communicate through written texts and spoken interaction (Lupton, 1992). These online promotion materials are particularly interesting to investigate the development discourse used. Voluntourists often use websites as their first entry point on knowledge on voluntourism, thus they contribute to the shaping of their views and their own development discourse (Zeddies & Millei, 2015).

Participatory observation

An important participatory observation I have undertaken, was a two-week project with African Impact, where I was volunteering as a medical volunteer. During these two weeks, I was living with the volunteers in the volunteer house and during the day, I went on project. My day started by having breakfast with the volunteers between 7 and 8, and leaving for project at 8:30, then coming back for lunch at 12:15, then leaving again for project in the afternoon at 13:15 and eventually coming back at 16:00. In the evening, we would have dinner at 18:00, after which we often went out for dessert or a drink in the restaurants in town.

Before I left for South Africa, I had emailed all the volunteer organisations I could find in St Lucia. In this email, I had informed the organisations that I would be coming to St Lucia to conduct my master thesis on voluntourism. Only one organisation, KAYA volunteering, answered my email, and informed me that they would like to help me with my master thesis (KAYA, 2018). They suggested me to do a two-week volunteering project with them. However, these two weeks were not on a free basis, as I had to pay the same amount as the volunteers, which was 1,281.75 Euro. Once in the field I found out that the organisation, was an agency, and not the actual volunteer organisation, which was African Impact. African Impact offers an education project and a medical project. I chose for the medical project, because I thought that would be the projects the furthest away from my comfort zone, as I do not have any medical background nor practical medical skills.

During these two weeks, I was able to take part in the everyday interactions of the host community in an intense way (Scheepers, et al., 2005). This offered the possibility to observe the volunteers while interacting with the host community, and gave me access to the people working with the projects. Since I have spent two full weeks with the volunteers and the host community, they felt more comfortable around me and therefore gave me a more accurate view on the volunteer's experiences and perceptions (Sin, 2009). After these weeks, I went back to the volunteer house every day for lunch. During that time, the volunteers often discussed what they had done at project. I occasionally joined the volunteers on project, however since I did not pay, this was not possible every time.

I was also able to join VESA on project for two days. Since representatives of the organisation only arrived in the last two weeks of my stay in St Lucia and I had some troubles getting in contact with the organisation, I could not conduct more participatory observation with them. At first the volunteer organisation did not want to have contact with me at all, because it would only lead to 'negative things' (Field notes, 15-05-2018). Eventually I spoke to the right person, where after I had more access to observations and interviews. I joined the volunteer organisation two days in the crocodile centre. Where the volunteers first had a two-hour tour through the rehabilitation centre, afterwards they built two benches.

With the third organization, ROV, I could not do any participatory observation at all. This was because they only arrived in St Lucia in the last week of my stay, and the founder told me that the volunteers would not like it if I would join them on project, because I did not pay for it (Interview #34).

Semi-structured interviewing

In total, I conducted 31 one-on-one interviews with different actors involved, including volunteers, voluntourism organisations and the host community. Besides this, I have done two group discussions with volunteers and one group discussion with nurses in the Khula clinic. The entire list of interview participants can be found in Appendix I. Interviewing different actors, who are involved, is important for data triangulation. All these interviews were semi-structured (Scheepers et al., 2005), which implies

that the interviews were more structured than informal interviews, but still gave the respondents the feeling of freedom to express their own perceptions (Sin, 2009). I had made a topic list, which can be found in Appendix II. I brought this topic list with me to every interview, however I adjusted these questions to the respondent in question, and over time these questions changed or topics were added. To make sure the research participants felt comfortable around me, I first held informal interviews with them. These informal interviews were held in an environment where the participants felt safe and at home, for example during project or in the volunteer house. In order to create a safe environment where the volunteers and host communities could express their feelings without having the feeling someone could hear these, the formal interviews were held in cafés.

Selection of research respondents

Since African Impact was active the whole period of time, most of the interviews were held with people who were involved with that organisation. During the time of the fieldwork it was low season with African Impact. Being in low season meant that there were a maximum of four new volunteers every two weeks. Almost all the volunteers who had done a project during these months have been interviewed, and all the staff that work for the organisation have been interviewed.

With VESA there were far more volunteers, thus a snowball method has been used to find respondents for interviews. Snowball sampling means that the researcher gains access to new informants through the other informants, thus the researcher makes use of the social contacts his informant has in order to gain access to new informants (Noy, 2008). I have also held interviews with business owners in St Lucia, to get a better view on how they look at voluntourism, and how the volunteer organisations are imbedded within the community.

Field notes

During my interviews and my volunteer work, I have taken field notes. Field notes are important for data triangulation, in order to capture the details in the interviews and during participatory observation (Scheepers, et al., 2005). The field notes include a diary of the observations and reflections and concerns I had during the day. Photographs and film have also been used as a field note, since they capture the emotional reactions and bodily movement of the encounters with voluntourism. (Cousins et al., 2009).

Data analysis

I analysed the data collected in the field by listening, transcribing and coding the content. The interviews were recorded using a mobile phone, and transcribed within 24 hours. All the 34 interviews have been transcribed and coded, using a code tree. This code tree was based on the three sub questions. Each sub question was ordered in different codes, for example the first and second sub questions I used codes like; 'Skill', 'Need' and 'Poor but happy'. This coding and transcribing made it easier to find the data and use this data as quotes. The combination of different data methods, has improved triangulation of the thesis.

2.3 Ethical considerations

The positionality of the researcher plays a central component in the process of qualitative data collection (Ganga & Scott, 2006). Therefore, our personal background plays an important role in how we perceive and interpret things. I am white, female, well-educated and Dutch, these characteristics are similar to the majority of the voluntourists (Cousins et al., 2009). This has had an influence on the research, in a way that I fitted in well with the volunteers, because they were around the same age as me and I previously did volunteer work as well. I have had more struggles fitting in with the host community, as there was a language barrier, and they were often from a different background.

The research was done over a period of three months. This time was needed to make myself familiar in the area and to let people get to know me. Because I was in the field for a longer period, the research participants felt more comfortable around me and more open to talk about the subject.

While starting my two-week project with the volunteer organisation, I explained immediately to my fellow volunteers and the staff that I was doing my master thesis on voluntourism, and that the observations made during the project would be used in my thesis. Consent was asked to all the participants who were involved with the organisation. During the semi-structure interviews, consent was asked again for the recording of the interviews, and eventually the use of the information gained for the final report. The participants agreed upon the anonymity of them within the research, so that they cannot be tracked back. In this thesis, the interviews are numbered, so that they are fully anonymous.

2.4 Limitations and opportunities in the fieldwork

A big opportunity, which was a limitation at the same time, was my two-week volunteer project with African Impact. This opportunity gave me valuable connections with the staff and volunteers, which made it easier for me to interview them and receive the right information. However, time was a limitation. Two weeks was not enough to fully understand the projects or go to several projects more than once. As I only participated in the medical project, I did not get a lot of access to the education project. Since I paid 1200 Euro from my own pocket for the two weeks, extra time would have been too expensive.

Since I did not pay for the other two volunteer organizations, it was more difficult to enter into their projects. With one of the volunteer organizations, I was not allowed to go on project at all, and with the other organization only for two days. Thus, the fact that I had to pay to do volunteering had a major role in conducting my research. Time was also a big limitation with two of the three voluntourism organizations, and made me only able to scratch the surface of these organizations. ROV only arrived in St Lucia in my last week of fieldwork, and VESA volunteering arrived in St Lucia in my second to last week. Building contact and trust with organizations takes time, time that was not available.

In the end, the host community was less involved in the thesis than I had hoped. One reason for this was that the host community often had less time to participate in my research, as they were working full time or had house chores (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). A second reason was that there was a language barrier. People living in the community spoke Zulu, and some spoke a bit of English. I do not speak Zulu, and therefore I was reliant on the translation of the medical coordinator. Another limitation was that the subject voluntourism was sometimes a burdensome or sensitive subject for the host community to talk about. Therefore, they were quite hesitant in participating in my research. They were often afraid that doing an interview with me would put their job in danger (Field notes, 20-05-2018).

Scheepers et al (2005) describes that there is always a tension while doing participatory observation, as you are both an insider and an outsider. This implies that as a researcher, you do not want to be entirely adapted to the group, because that might influence your result, but you do not want to stay at the side-line either. This was particularly difficult during my two-week volunteer project. I did not want to influence people's conversations about the projects too much, but I did want them to think critically about the projects they were working on. The volunteers might not have thought so critically about the projects without my presence. I think it was a good choice not to live in the volunteer house once my two-week project was over. I lived in a hostel, walking distance from the volunteer house, so I was present every day, but did not have the opportunity to go to an outside 'home'.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this thesis, is based on four main overarching concepts namely; tourism, othering, authenticity and commodification. These concepts are elaborated on, because I believe they will further help me answer the research question. Therefore, the results of this thesis are build further on these four concepts.

3.1 Tourism and development

“Tourism has moved more people over larger distances and to more destinations, than all the wars in history together.” (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012) This quote highlights the importance and range of tourism in the world, therefore it is important to study tourism. Urry (1992) described tourism as a leisure activity that seeks the opposite from ordinary daily life. Tourism includes the movement and stay in a particular place; these places are being chosen with the intention to be gazed upon, a tourist gaze. Any gaze we construct is formed in relation to its opposite. Tourism can be described as a way to escape from reality and the pressure of everyday life. While mass tourism is a popular way of travelling, people have started questioning mass tourism to be potentially harmful to the environment and to social relations where being toured (Kass, 2013). One critique is that large-scale tourism negatively influences fragile environments, and leads to cultural change among traditional indigenous groups (Kass, 2013). A response to this criticism is the rise of new alternative forms of tourism. The aim of these alternative forms of tourism is to satisfy the visitors as well as the hosts, while respecting natural and social-cultural values of the host country (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). Therefore alternative forms of tourism are built on the belief that tourism should be beneficial not only to the tourist, but also to the host community (Pastran, 2014). Voluntourism is being hailed by some scholars (Gray & Campbell, 2007) as being a new alternative form of tourism, as it is promoted being beneficial for the voluntourists and for the host communities. Accordingly, voluntourism is presented as a development tool, as it satisfies the needs of the host community (Swan, 2012). This thesis looks specifically at voluntourism in South Africa, therefore it is important to get a good view on tourism in South Africa and tourism in Africa in general.

Tourism in South Africa

African tourism has increased in the last few years, but it still only accounts for 3 to 5% of the world’s tourism, when looking at the size of the continent, land surface and population number you can state that this is an underscore (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). There are generally two reasons why people want to visit ‘Africa’. One is the nature Africa provides; the big five, the jungle and the savannah. The other reason why people visit, is the culture of Africa, which include its picturesque people. However, such picturesque people are often presented as in need of development. These two reasons are also obvious in voluntourism, for example looking at the package deal adventure holiday offered by VESA, they have one adventure week where they experience the nature of Africa, and one week of volunteering where they work with people and experience the culture (VESA, 2018). On their website, they state the following where a lot of emphasis is placed on the nature of Africa:

“The adventure tour component of Africa Unearthed is incredible... Taking in two countries and a huge array of activities the volunteers have the time of their life. They will have the chance to come face to face with Africa’s ‘Big Five’ wildlife on safari, swim in the warm Indian Ocean have their fortunes told by a witch doctor, white water raft or quad bike in Swazi and loads more!” (VESA, 2018).

While Africa in the tourist branch is often presented as a one-country destination, South Africa gets special attention (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). South Africa is portrayed as the ‘white man's’ Africa, which generates confidence and belonging. While the type of tourism in other African countries is mainly around nature, South African tourism offers more variety, including beach holidays and small picturesque towns. South Africa can be counted as a mass tourism destination, if you consider the amount of tourists landing at the airports or harbours every year (Rolfes, 2010). This might be the reason why South Africa is the second highest destination of volunteer projects in numbers, according to Tomazos & Cooper (2012). Since the country can be seen as a mass tourism destination, it has a relatively safe tourist bubble (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). A tourist bubble are the means created to host tourists, like infrastructure and ways of protecting the tourist. A tourist bubble is designed to ensure that the encounters tourists have with the host country, does not trigger the tourist's fear of the unknown (Hüncke & Koot, 2012). Therefore a tourist bubble produces comfort in the wilderness, and eventually filters and produces information about the host community, on what is interesting and ‘authentic’ (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). In the end, in this tourist bubble, the tourist is introduced to Africa, without fully experiencing it. Othering is a concept, which can be linked to the tourist bubble.

3.2. Othering

Said (1985) defines othering as a process by which a group constructs an out-group as a negative of their own group. The out-group is a negative compared to the in-group, in a way that they are described as unfavourable and/or backward and are the complete opposite of the in-group. According to Pastran (2014), Said looked at the way in which Europe produces colonial discourse of the orient, in order to exert power over the colonized. An important concept of Said (1985) is orientalism; this is a process where the West creates a negative image of the East, and how the Third World is portrayed as a homogenous geography of backwardness. The simplification and homogenization of ‘Oriental’ people is intended so that it could be recognizable to the Western image (Simpson, 2004).

Othering is an important concept to analyse voluntourism, as voluntourism projects may produce and reproduce particular notions of the third world, of the ‘Other’ and of development (Simpson, 2004). An idea of the third world is created in the heads of the volunteers that constitute the legitimacy of unskilled labourers as a way of development. Many volunteer tourism projects emphasize the notion of need, and (unconsciously) use a ‘poor but happy’ interpretation of the third world (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016; Swan, 2012; Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2016). This is the idea that some people do not really mind being poor and luck is used to explain inequalities and differences. This poor but happy stereotype minimizes the complexities and homogenizes entire populations. In the quote used in the introduction, this poor but happy interpretation of the third world is visible, by pointing out that “all the children living here are so happy, compared to the children back home”. Exotization and/or romantization of people is a part of othering. This concept can be defined as the construction of the other as strange and mysterious; they are desired and attractive, but always in a distant way. Romantic views homogenise people into a happy whole (Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2016), and dehisotrisize and depoliticize the global south by leaving out colonization and failed development initiatives.

Othering and gazing upon a certain subject does not only belong to tourists, because both locals and tourists gaze upon each other. Maoz (2006) makes the distinction between a tourist gaze and a local gaze. While a tourism gaze is described as the power and authority western tourists hold and exercise over the inhabitants of the places they gaze upon and visit, a local gaze is described as the agency and the power locals have in third world countries.

When (volun)tourists come in contact with those perceived as their mirror image and authentic symbolic opposite, tourists gain confidence that they themselves are worthy (Garland & Gordon, 1999). Thus through exposure to the 'authentic' other, the self establishes a sense of its own authenticity. Therefore an important element of othering is that people are considered to be authentic, but as the literature shows (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012; Rolfes, 2010; Bruner, 2001), what exactly authenticity means is ambiguous and depends on the very specific tourism context.

3.3 Authenticity

According to MacCannell (1973), tourism is motivated by the quest and demand for authenticity. However, what authenticity implies is still enigmatic. Van Beek & Schmidt (2012) see authenticity as the way we think the past should inform the present and Bruner (2001) defines authenticity as an inherent distinction between what is authentic and what is inauthentic. Authenticity is thus an ambiguous term, but often related to a coming together of 'opposites', either modernity and tradition or tourist and host community.

Although the concept of authenticity has been used widely in relation to tourism studies, this is not the case as much specifically for voluntourism. Authenticity is important in studying voluntourism because many voluntourism organisations promote volunteering abroad as the way to experience 'authentic' cultural life of the host community (Swan, 2012). This 'authentic' life of the host community is often advertised as being untouched by modernity and life prior to penetration of western influences (Cohen, 1988). Voluntourists are therefore motivated to do volunteer projects because they have a longing to see life as it 'really is lived'. Voluntourists seek authentic experiences, because modernity can be understood as a state of in-authenticity (Büscher et al., 2017), in order to find authenticity you need to seek elsewhere.

Voluntourism is often advertised as a way to enter the 'back region' of the place tourists visit. While front places are meeting places of host and guests, where the hosts perform for the guests. Back regions are places where members of the host community retire between performances to relax and prepare for the next performance; these back regions are associated with intimacy and authenticity (MacCannell, 1973). Organisations try to convince the volunteers as well that they are bridging 'staged' authenticity that is connected to mass tourism, and are fully embedded in the host community (Henry, 2016). Staged authenticity is used for places designed for tourist that believe in the authenticity of these experiences (MacCannell, 1973). However MacCannell argues (1973) that (volun)tourist settings, are always arranged to produce the impression that you are entering a back region, even though this is often not the case.

Chhabra et al. (2003) elaborates that authenticity aimed for today is a way to copy the original, modify, and shape it to meet the needs of the modern society. Therefore, tourists will eventually accept cultural products and cultural life as authentic when their traits are judged to be authentic (Cohen, 1988). Tourists expect and take for granted that cultures are authentic, but what they accept as authentic is their own construction, based on a given image (Hüncke & Koot, 2012). Pictures used by voluntourism organisations often create this image. Thus, eventually everything can become authentic, as long as you believe it is authentic, and in this way authenticity is being staged. Cohen (1988) accordingly states that tourists will eventually accept commercialized objects as authentic, as long as they are convinced it is indeed traditional design and hand made by the members of the host community. Therefore, commodification is an issue closely related to the concept of authenticity (Halewood & Hannam, 2001; Cole, 2007).

3.4 Commodification

Commodification is a process where ‘things’ become evaluated by their market value and can be traded on the market, these things become a good (Cohen, 1988). Objects get a price on a market and can be traded for other goods. Greenwood (1989) states that the fundamental aspect of our capitalist world system is that anything can be priced and bought and sold. Anything therefore can be treated as a commodity, thus voluntourism has also become a commodity. As voluntourism increased in popularity, various commercial organisations have stepped into the market, transforming the organisations involved from non-profit to commercial operators (Parfitt, 2015).

Coren & Gray (2012) suggest that there are three components of commodification in voluntourism; environmental commodification, economic commodification and cultural commodification. With environmental commodification, nature is being commodified, which is less important for social volunteering addressed in this thesis. With economic commodification, the activity of voluntourism is being seen as a business with the primary goal of making profit. With cultural commodification, cultural aspects are being trivialized.

Many scholars (Cohen, 1988, MacCannell, 1973, Büscher et al., 2017) have notified that tourism may lead to the commodification of indigenous societies and harm their ‘authenticity’, as tourism turns culture into a commodity which can be packed and sold to the tourists (Cole, 2007; Maoz, 2006). These authors place questions on what happens to other meanings of performances, rituals and objects, when they become commodified. Shepherd (2002) argues that while tourism may boost a new interest in traditional arts and social practices, tourists only purchase with a desire to possess a mark, rather than having genuine interest in local cultural traditions. When rituals have become a performance for money, the meaning has gone, is argued by Greenwood (1989). When tourist spaces become commodified, this implies that they can be easily consumed by the mass tourist. Maoz (2006) argues that commodification and staged authenticity become a way to protect the back region of the host community, by keeping the tourists focussed on the commercialized front. Commodification is important in the voluntourism discourse, as voluntourism is often seen as an economic activity driven by profit (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). Volunteers pay money to volunteer organisations in western countries, who make a profit, in order to volunteer in developing countries (Swan, 2012).

Klein (2007) proposes in her book, that every time a new crisis hits, this crisis is addressed by using the same economic market mechanisms that might have started this crisis, this process is called disaster capitalism. Thus, disasters in the end often justify further neoliberalism (Fletcher, 2018). The ultimate end goal of disaster capitalism is to replace the state with its own private profitable enterprises (Klein, 2007). The result of this disaster capitalism, is that the relationships between the included and excluded, the protected and the damned, does not change. Tourism is in core a capitalist practice, and in turn, tourism has an important role in sustaining and expanding global capitalism (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017). Therefore the global tourism industry might be seen as a form of disaster capitalism (Fletcher, 2018), in a way that new products for tourist marketing and consumption are developed, derived out of problems that might be caused by capitalist development. One of these new products for tourist marketing is voluntourism.

Some scholar have linked voluntourism to the concept of Philanthrocapitalism (Tomazos & Cooper, 2011). Philanthrocapitalism implies that a (volunteer)organisation undertakes philanthropy, which is designed to achieve socio-economic mobility of local people and long term improvements, but only under the condition that there is direct economic benefits and gains by doing so (Tomazos & Cooper, 2011). Wilson (2014a) argues that Philanthrocapitalism is an ideological formation, which produces and reproduces a specific social fantasy or jouissance. Jouissance can be seen as a form of enjoyment, but

this enjoyment is also related to pain, disgust and horrified fascination. It is a paradoxical pleasure produced by the displeasure itself (Wilson, 2014b). Philanthrocapitalism is framed within the picture of poverty alleviation and idea of saving lives, where we western consumer are invited to enjoy the spectacle of global inequality as a sort of forbidden domain.

3.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter served as the foundation for the rest of the thesis. This chapter started by presenting an overview of theories on tourism in general and tourism in South Africa. Arguing that tourism is a leisure activity that seeks the opposite from ordinary daily life, in places that are to be gazed upon. Voluntourism is often presented as a new alternative form of tourism, as it is promoted being beneficial for the voluntourists and for the host communities. South African being a 'mass tourism' destination creates a relatively safe tourist bubble. Secondly, I have introduced the concept of othering, which is a process by which a group constructs an out-group as a negative of their own group, and why it is important to study voluntourism. An important element of othering is that people are perceived to be authentic, therefore the third concept I have discussed is authenticity. What authenticity is, is ambiguous, but it is related to the coming together of opposites. Commodification is closely related to authenticity, as commercial objects can be presented as being 'authentic'. Therefore the last concept I have elaborated upon is commodification, which implies that everything, like voluntourism, can be treated as a commodity. In the chapter four, five and six the theories presented here, are related to findings in the field.

4. Othering

It was lunchtime in the volunteer house. All the volunteers had finished their morning on project, and gathered around the big lunch table. While they were filling their plates with salad and meatballs, there was an excited atmosphere, as they had an astonishing morning on the education project. The community coordinator had organized a dance battle with all the children in crèche. 'If we would organize a dance battle in England, none of the children would have danced' said a volunteer, and another volunteer was impressed and left speechless by the acrobatic skills the children had; 'I bet these African children miss a rib, otherwise they could not move like this'. They showed us the videos they had made of the dances. One of the volunteers was a bit disappointed that she was not filmed while she was dancing with the children, because she wanted to post in on Instagram and Facebook.

VIGNETTE 2 ADOPTED FROM FIELD NOTES ON 17-04-2018

The vignette above gives an illustration of a perception volunteers have on the host community. In this chapter, I elaborate on the host and guest perspectives within voluntourism, this chapter is built upon the first sub question; *How do hosts and guests perspectives of each other change under the influence of social voluntourism?* This chapter begins by elaborating on the 'poor but happy' interpretation of the third world used by voluntourists. Secondly, the concept of entering the 'back region' is discussed. The third part analyses how the host community perceives the voluntourists, by portraying them as doctors and lovers. The last part illustrates what kind of influence the use of social media has on voluntourists and their host community. Important for this chapter are the concepts of othering and authenticity as explained in the theoretical framework in chapter three.

4.1 "Poor but happy" interpretation of the third world

One of the questions asked during the interviews with the volunteers, was what kind of image they had of South Africa before coming, and if this image changed. I asked this specific question so that the volunteers would think about how they see the host community they work with. While some answered that they did not have any expectations (Interview #4 & #5), many answers were related to the way South Africa is portrayed in the media;

"I have always seen Africa in general as a dry, dusty area. We have seen those commercials on TV, where you can give away money to kids in Africa, people in need. Those kind of images, dirty kids sitting along the road, sad people. It is kind of wrong saying it out loud. It was the only image I had." (Interview #15)

Most of the volunteers images of the host community, changed after arriving on the field. While the quote above, shows that the volunteer first thought the people would be sad. However her image changed drastically, as she later on described the local community as 'so happy' (Interview #15). This is a good example of a poor but happy interpretation of the third world, which implies that all differences, including economic differences, can be explained through culture (Simpson, 2004; Swan, 2012). In the end somehow people do not really mind being poor.

"They do not know how we live. Then this is their world. This is their truth. They do not know anything, and they are happy when they get attention and get to play with other people's toys. They do not expect the materialism, the same way children in our country do." (Interview #15)

This passage is compelling in the way two different worlds are sketched by the volunteer, 'their world' and 'our world'. Creating two different worlds is part of Othering, where a group constructs an out-group as a negative of their own group (Said, 1985). According to the volunteer the host community lives in a world where they do not know how 'we' live, thus the host community is presented as backward. The children the volunteer talks about do not really mind being poor, as they do not know

how 'we' live. Therefore a poor but happy interpretation of a third world can be relate to the concept of Othering, as this interpretation creates a dichotomy between us versus them (Crossley, 2012).

"In some way it seems like they have got all they need, not all they want. I think that that just makes people happy, to not have too much. Not that material. You can see when we bring the crayons and some paper to the crèches, they are just so happy. [...] It seems like they all know each other too, they stay close to family and friends. They just seem happy, even though their lives must be hard sometimes." (Interview #13)

By saying "In some way it seems like they have got all they need, and not all they want" being poor is being simplified and put on a positive note. It also seems as if being poor can be overcome just by giving some crayons. Another positive note, is the emphasis place on relations built within families, which comes forward in the quote above. While 'we' live in an individual world, 'they' live in a world which has strong ties to friends and family. Thus poor people are in a way being 'compensated' for their poverty by strong emotional community ties (Crossley, 2012).

"You are spoiled when you live in a first world country. And then you come over here and it changes the way you see things. It is like, other people live so poorly. And you complain when there is like 5 things in the fridge, while they only have one thing sometimes. It changes you as a person. It makes you see like there is other people in the world, that are so happy, but they have nothing. Yet you have everything back at home." (Interview #29)

According to Crossley (2012), people who undergo traumatic life events, like volunteering, frequently experience positive outcomes from these experiences, as the development of greater appreciation for their lives back home. The volunteer in the quote above reflects on all the things she has in her home country, and compares that to the things she saw during her volunteer work. Once again, the differences between the volunteers and the host community are emphasized. However, the voluntourists are concentrating on their own position by using a lotto logic (Simpson, 2004). In a 'lotto logic', discussions of inequality and oppression are being replaced by being lucky. Luck is used to explain the inequalities and differences in the world, without looking at further causes.

4.2 Entering the back region

Voluntourism is often promoted by voluntourism organisations as a way of entering the 'back region', as voluntourists work in places where regular tourists do not have access to (Swan, 2012). The idea is that while tourists only watch, volunteers experience (Swan, 2012). While regular tourists only enter the front region, which is a meeting place for hosts and guests, the back region is a region where the host community goes to relax and prepare for the performance on the front region (MacCannell, 1973). A back region of a community is a place where things are 'real', without performance. This concept of entering the back region is actively being used for promotion materials of voluntourism organisation, a

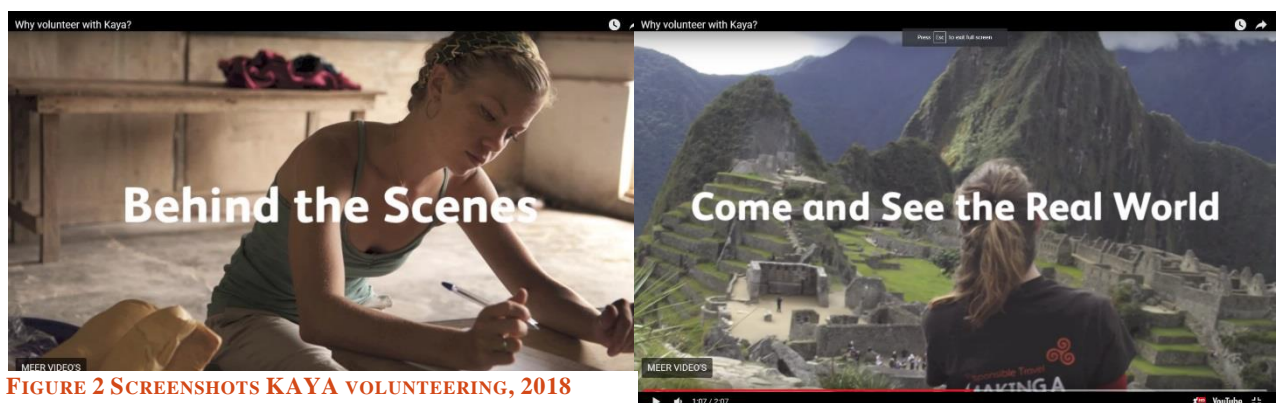


FIGURE 2 SCREENSHOTS KAYA VOLUNTEERING, 2018

good example are these screenshots taken from a promotion video of volunteer agency KAYA on the previous page.

Entering a back region implies that you make deep connections with the host community. However, there are certain barriers preventing intimate engagement with the host community that has been promised by the voluntourism organisation (Crossley, 2012). Firstly, deep connections need time; you cannot bond with someone overnight. Time is something that voluntourists often do not have. Most of the voluntourism projects only last between two weeks to three months (Kass, 2013), and some projects are even less than two weeks. With VESA, the volunteers only have six days of volunteering, where they go to a different project every other day. This means that the volunteers only interacted with the same people of the host community twice. Another barrier of the VESA volunteer program is that the volunteers only actively work with the host community in the education project. In this project, the volunteers work in schools, and actually interact with the children. While at the conservation project, the volunteers only interact with the tour guide and at the construction project the volunteers only work with two local builders.

One of the reasons African Impact has a minimum of two weeks of volunteering, is that you otherwise do not get the chance to get to know the host community (Interview #14). However, the variety of projects might be an obstacle. Since African Impact offers several different projects within the medical project, I rarely saw community members twice during my volunteer project. Nonetheless, when I did get to meet a community member twice, there was always a language barrier. Most of the community members did not speak English or just a few basic words, which meant that the medical coordinator had to translate everything to the volunteers. This language barrier was expressed by several volunteers to be an issue;

“What has been your worst experience? Well there was one time that we were in the crèche. And a small little girl started to cry while we were having lunch. It is hard when you are not able to speak to them, to understand what is going on. I was really touched at that moment too. I felt so bad for that little girl. So it is hard when you cannot express. Sometimes you just want to talk to them. But you can't because they won't understand it.”(Interview #13)

Another barrier that prevents voluntourists for entering the ‘back region’ is that the volunteers are staying in St Lucia, and not in the communities themselves. After the volunteer work, the volunteers drive out of the communities in their project car, across the bridge into an entirely different environment. While in St Lucia you have huge shiny billboards, restaurants and swimming pools, in the communities you have gravel roads and roaming cows. Here the volunteers slept with a maximum of six in one room in a bunk bed on a foam mattress, had running water, a refrigerator, a flush toilet and reliant electricity. The volunteers did not spend their free time with community members, as it was not allowed to go to the communities after project on your own, because the communities would be dangerous at night (Fieldnotes, 13-03-2018). In their leisure time, the volunteers had contact with their fellow volunteers, or with tourists who were also staying in St Lucia. The volunteers went to ‘white’ bars and ‘white’ restaurants, where people spoke English.

The voluntourists thus lived in a safe and comfortable ‘tourist bubble’ (Van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). The only contact the volunteers had with the host community was during project hours, under surveillance of the medical or community coordinator, who would translate for them. As Henry (2016) notes in his article, blending in with locals might become undesirable for voluntourists when there are language barriers and cultural differences. That the voluntourists stay in a ‘white’ environment is specific for South Africa, as in other developing countries there might be less ‘white’ environments round.

Voluntourists as tourists?

For voluntourists, it was often very important to make the distinction that they were not tourists (Cousins et al., 2009; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). The biggest distinction made between voluntourists and tourists was that voluntourists are here to do 'actual work', while tourists are here to have a holiday. Voluntourists also stressed that they had been 'living' in South Africa, while tourists only 'visit'. Volunteers are being told by voluntourism organisations, that they differ from tourists because their experience will be 'authentic' and involve deep immersion into another culture (Swan, 2012). As the quote below indicates, the volunteers actually put this distinction between tourists and voluntourists in practice;

“This is not a holiday. I would not mind being on a project 7 days a week, and felt I was making a difference I would do that 7 days a week. Yes we are having a lovely weekend, but I am not here on a holiday.” (Interview #17)

However, is there such a big distinction between voluntourists and tourists? Like tourists, the voluntourists of VESA stayed in a backpackers hostel, surrounded by western people and went to the same bar as the tourists. The voluntourists go to the same tourist destinations surrounding St Lucia as tourists. With VESA volunteering these tourist destinations were already included in the package deal, while with African Impact the volunteers could do these tourist activities in the weekend, booked via African Impact. The voluntourism projects are situated in a prime tourist destination. As South Africa's first UNESCO World Heritage site, the iSimangaliso wetlands park receives thousands of tourists every year, where most of the tourists are hosted in St Lucia (Nustad, 2015). When I asked the business manager of African Impact, why the project was situated in St Lucia she told me that African Impact is always in more tourist areas, so that the volunteers have something to do in the weekend and therefore the step to do volunteer work would be less scary (Interview #14);

“When volunteers come in, you want them to have options on the weekend, during nights. You do not know their travel background. This might be their only time in life that they come to Africa. They could use their time to explore. If you are located so far out, that might be a bit more difficult.” (Interview #14)

Thus while there is an emphasis on places and the host community being poor and underdeveloped, at the same time they must be familiar and safe enough for the voluntourists (Zeddies & Millei, 2015).

4.3 Volunteers seen as doctors and lovers

Not only do the volunteers have a particular perception of the host community, the host community also looks at the volunteers in a distinct way. On my second day of volunteering, I was placed in the vitals room of the clinic. While I have no experience with measuring vitals, like blood pressure, and have no knowledge what blood pressure actually implies, I measured the blood pressure of 63 patients that came in that morning. When I asked one of the nurses why people accepted it that a volunteer take these vitals, she told me that often people think we are actual doctors (Field notes, 13-03-2018). Regularly the only time people in the communities see 'white' people, is when they have to go to the doctor. Since the volunteers are sitting in a clinic, this way of thinking is quite logical. While most of the volunteers do not have a medical background, they are perceived as doctors and therefore as important by the host community (Interview #10 & #11). Being perceived as a doctor legitimized the presence of the volunteers in the clinic.

Before going to the clinic that day, I was warned by older volunteers about a male nurse. They had had some uncomfortable experiences with him, as he had tried to flirt with them. They told me that with each new volunteer he tried the same trick, because he wanted to have a 'white' girlfriend (Field notes

13-03-2018). When I later interviewed the male nurse, I asked him why he wanted to have a white girlfriend. He told me that he wanted to see countries outside Africa (Interview #10). He therefore portrayed the volunteers as a way out of Africa. Not only was this the case with the male nurse, the female nurses had the same ideas. One of them asked me if I had a brother and if he was single, when I asked her why she wanted to have a white boyfriend she told me that white men 'love in a different way' (Field notes, 17-03-2018). This is an example of how the volunteers are being romanticized by the host community, in this case by the nurses in the clinic. Romanticization of people is part of othering, as the 'other' is being constructed as strange and mysterious, and they are desired and attractive (Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2016). Most of the volunteers are young, white and female, and portrayed as a lust object by the nurses, with probably economic value and a way to enter Europe or America. During the induction of African Impact, we were warned not to have relationships with people in the community, as this would harm the image of African Impact and give emotional stress in the community (Field notes, 12-03-2018). However a local storeowner told me that she had stopped working with African Impact, after she found out that a former volunteer coordinator was having a relationship with a local man, who was married (Interview #24). However since this year she started collaborating again with African Impact, as these managers seemed 'more serious'.

The voluntourists being seen as doctors and potential lovers are examples of a local gaze (Maoz, 2006). The host community perceives the voluntourists in this way. These gazes are often constructed upon previous and numerous encounters with tourists, where tourists are seen as a source of money and potential economic gain. However, these local gazes are repeatedly based on extreme stereotypes and might be related to the colonial past (Maoz, 2006). The voluntourists being seen as doctors is related to the colonial past, as previously mainly white people were doctors. The concept of the local gaze gives agency to the host community, and does not portray the host community as passive recipients.

4.4 Use of social media and photography

Larsen (2006) notes that tourism is constructed culturally, socially and materially through images captured by photography. Photography enhances the tourist gaze, which is the way tourists gaze upon particular events (Urry, 1992). The tourist gaze is usually constructed by media in the western society, which routine and direct the gaze (Maoz, 2006). Much tourism therefore is actually a search for the photogenic, as it is a strategy for the accumulation of photographs (Urry, 1992). Capturing the volunteering experience on camera was a very important aspect of the journey of the volunteers. Never did the volunteers go on project without taking their mobile phone, go-pro's or camera's with them, and every afternoon the group WhatsApp of the volunteers would be full with pictures of the volunteers with the children in crèche, or a medical volunteer with a patient while taking blood pressure.

One afternoon I accompanied the education volunteers of African Impact to the holiday club. At one point the community coordinator organized a dance battle with the children. At that moment, I really felt like an outsider, as we were not participating and standing on higher ground, looking down on the children, only there to observe and to take pictures, see figure 3. In many ways these dancing and smiling children crystalize the voluntourists imagination of South African children (Gillespie, 2006). These children became the markers of exotic, authentic Otherness, and these images needed to be shared with everyone back at home, via Social Media. Not only were children central in taking pictures, volunteers of VESA also held photoshoots in crocodile basins filled with several dangerous adult Nile crocodiles, see figure 4.



FIGURE 3 VOLUNTEER TAKING PICTURES OF DANCING CHILDREN, PERSONAL PICTURE



FIGURE 3 VOLUNTEERS TAKING PICTURES IN FRONT OF CROCODILES, PERSONAL PICTURES

While the volunteers of African Impact were granted to take pictures, they did get some restrictions. For example the volunteers were not allowed to take selfies with the children, because you need a lot of physical interaction to take a selfie, which was not the intention. The volunteers were also not allowed to take pictures of single children looking sad at the camera, as this would not ‘challenge’ stereotypes (Field notes, 12-03-2018). A stereotype is a process in which we assign categories to people, and act based upon these categories (Baldwin, 1981). The pictures the volunteers took were thus supposed to shed light on volunteering in a particular kind of way. However, is a picture of a bronzed volunteer surrounded by ten African smiling children, not a stereotype as well? When voluntourists arrive in a new host country, they already have fixed prior images (Maoz, 2006). Larsen (2006) argues that tourists travel and make pictures, of images they have already consumed. This means that the pictures taken by the volunteers would be a replica of pictures already promoted and used by voluntourism organizations. Volunteers thus try to reproduce the ‘authentic’ Africa, which is sketched by the voluntourism organizations. These representations fuel our desires to see particular places, in a way that is understandable. The ‘poor but happy’ interpretation, as discussed above, is very evident in the way voluntourism is represented. The images below show two pictures published on the website of voluntourism organizations (top), and two pictures of volunteers which they published on social media (below). These images are nearly identical, two close-ups of smiling children, and two portraits with a volunteer with a happy baby.



FIGURE 5 TOP LEFT PICTURE BY AFRICAN IMPACT, TOP RIGHT PICTURE BY VESA, BOTTOM PERSONAL PICTURES

4.5 Concluding remarks

The main purpose of this chapter was answering the first sub question; How do hosts and guests perspectives of each other change under the influence of social voluntourism? The main theoretical concept used within this chapter was othering. The findings have shown that the guests have several different perspectives of the hosts, as well as the other way around. One perspective used by the voluntourists was a poor but happy interpretation of the third world. Another perspective imposed by the voluntourism organisations on the voluntourists, was the idea that by doing volunteer work the participants enter the 'back region'. However this chapter has given several arguments why this might not be the case. Not only do the volunteers have a particular perception of the host community, the host community also looks at the volunteers in a distinct way. The host community often saw voluntourists as actual doctors, and as potential lover, or indirectly a way to enter the western world. Finally, the use and importance of photography and social media has been analyzed.

5. Development discourse

In this chapter, I elaborate on the development discourse used within the voluntourism organisations. The aim is to answer the second research question: *How do the voluntourists and the host community perceive the impact of the presented development discourse?* The first component will address what a development discourse is. The second component will analyse how this development discourse is used within voluntourism, the notions of skill and need are being highlighted. The third component looks at the perception of giving of gifts by the voluntourists. The last component analyses if voluntourism organisations have long-term development goals, and if so, how they propose these goals.

5.1 Development as discourse

Voluntourism projects create a publicly accepted ‘methodology’ of doing development, by using a particular development discourse (Simpson, 2004). A development discourse is a particular way of seeing and doing development. These discourses influences what kind of interventions are taken and who are involved in these interventions. Discourses can construct their own reality, which often clashes with the reality of daily life.

Ferguson (1990) describes in his book, how development institutions generate their own form of discourse, and this discourse packages the research site in a particular kind of knowledge structures. The actual interventions are then organized on the basis of this knowledge structure, which often does not fit with the actual reality. Development institutions prefer to use standardized development packages, where the host community is disconnected from the West as an apolitical place with a homogeneous community (Ferguson, 1990). This standardization has led to the failure of these development projects. Voluntourism projects also portray development in a certain way. According to Ferguson (1990), development discourses are often based upon the following notions, which can be implied within the development discourses used in St Lucia:

1. The host community is backward, untouched by modernity and agricultural (Ferguson, 1990). On the website of VESA they state that; *"A Volunteer Eco Students Abroad program allows you the opportunity to make a difference and enjoy incredible moments in some of the most beautiful and **remote** parts of the world"* (VESA, 2018, my italics). The surrounding areas of St Lucia, are thus described as being remote and far away from modernity. Whilst in reality the communities are only 15 minutes away from ‘western’ St Lucia, 30 minutes away from market town Matubatuba, and 3 hours away from metropolis Durban.
2. The host community is in need of outside assistance and development (Ferguson, 1990). People seem to lack something; they are in need of outside intervention to save them. This notion is also portrayed on the websites of voluntourism organization, like the following quote from African Impact; *"Living by the beach and surrounded by Africa's most magnificent wildlife, a life-changing experience in rural Zululand awaits you as you educate and support orphaned and **needy children and families in an underprivileged remote village in South Africa.**"* (African Impact, 2018, my italics). The notion of need will be explained further in a following paragraph.
3. The host community as in need of the solutions that the development agencies provide (Ferguson, 1990). *"Bringing together working groups of young people and local villagers, we empower you to **undertake hands on work for the benefit of these communities, delivering valuable and sustainable infrastructure in the areas of education, sanitation and water supply**"* (VESA, 2018, my italics). The development solutions that VESA volunteering can supply, are actively being promoted as a way to benefit the communities, without being critically analyzed.

5.2 A 'commodified' development discourse?

Voluntourism organisations often imply a neoliberal development discourse, whereby development is being privatized as well as packaged as a marketable commodity (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). Therefore voluntourism commoditizes development practices as something that can be bought and sold all over the world (Buchmayer, 2017; McGloin & Georgeou, 2016; Lin, 2016). According to Vodopivec & Jaffe (2011), development practices have undergone a process of privatization, as civil society has increasingly become the actors for development. This is a response to the increasing disbelief in grand political ideologies (Lin, 2016). Bottom up Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) and local communities are now appointed as the 'best' actors to do development. Within neoliberalism, individuals are expected to self-regulate, which implies that they take personal, private responsibility (Jukabiak, 2012). Neoliberal development discourse tends to essentialise the local host community as disconnected, apolitical and as a homogenous community, by creating two separate culturally distinct worlds. This homogenous idea of the host communities implies that the same solutions can be applied everywhere (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011), like we have encountered in the book by Ferguson (1990).

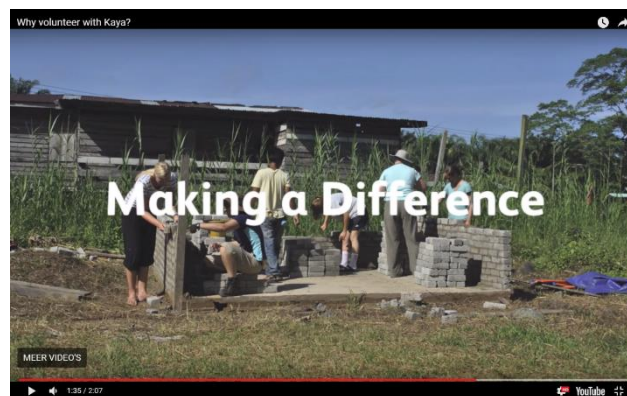


FIGURE 4 KAYA PROMOTION VIDEO, 2018

Voluntourism organisations promote themselves as agencies of development, in order to trade the idea that they send people to 'help' others in dire need of assistance (McGloin & Gorgeou, 2012). However, in the language they use on their websites and promotion materials, the word development is rarely used. Development is wrapped in slogans and phrases like 'making a difference' or 'making an impact'. Take as an illustration the screenshot from a YouTube promotion film of the agency KAYA (figure 7), and the quote of VESA on their website; "*Come join us in South Africa and Swaziland this year and help **make a difference** to the communities in the St Lucia area.*" (VESA, 2018, my italics). A reason why voluntourism organizations rarely use the word development, might be that you need specific knowledge in order to understand what 'development' actually is, something that voluntourists often lack.

The slogan of African Impact is; Explore, Inspire & Impact. Without using the word development, they emphasize that volunteering can inspire and have an impact the host community, and eventually thus 'develop' them. 'Development' is thus being opened up for everyone, and as something that can be done, and therefore development is being simplified. The dominant ideology is that doing something is better than doing nothing, which indicates that there is not much thought in the roots of inequality that are responsible for maintaining underdevelopment (Henry, 2016). Important elements of this development discourse is that development can be done without specific skills and development is done for the 'needy other'.

Skills

This simplification of development legitimizes the presence of young unskilled international volunteers as a development discourse. Voluntourism organisations also actively promote the fact that you do not need any skills or qualifications, as long as you are passionate and have a desire to help you can ‘do development’ (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011).

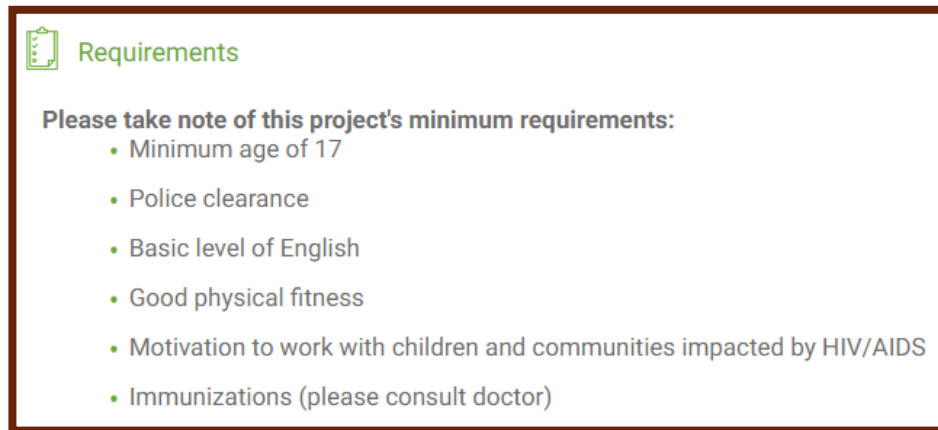


FIGURE 5 SCREENSHOT REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTOURISM PROJECT IN ST LUCIA, GoEco, 2018

The above picture shows the requirements needed in order to participate in the education voluntourism project in St Lucia by agency GoEco (GoEco, 2018). In this project, the volunteers will be working in crèches, even though they will be teaching these children, their only educational requirement is a basic level of English.

In the medical project I participated in, the only qualification I needed was a police check of adequate behaviour. However, I only found out that I needed to hand in this qualification while I was already in South Africa. The matter was settled with two recommendation letters from professors. The fact that I did not have any medical skills, made me feel useless at some parts of the projects. For example, my role as a volunteer at the physiotherapy project was to write down what the physiotherapist was doing with the patients. I could not actually participate within these exercises. If volunteers often feel useless during volunteer work, this could question the efficiency of using unskilled volunteer tourists as a tool for equable and sustainable development.

The fact that volunteers do not need any medical skills to be working in a clinic fits with a presumption of westernization as part of the development process (Simpson, 2004). Western voluntourists are seen as a model and inspiration for the host community, who will adopt their way of living. Therefore development should come from the outside, and is located in the hands of non-skilled, but wealthy and enthusiastic voluntourists. Instead of placing South Africans with a medical background in the clinic, they are replaced by non-skilled voluntourists. Along these lines, local knowledge and practices are understood as inferior, since voluntourists have ‘knowledge’ to give, without proper training (McGloin & Gorgeou, 2012). A critique to this westernization of development was evident during an interview with an African Impact medical volunteer; “*If I would walk into a clinic in a vitals room back home and I would see some volunteers without any medical background, who would be taking my blood pressure and weight, I would be like what the heck.*” (Interview #11).

During an interview with a tour leader of VESA, we talked about the importance of education. In the following quote, she explains why teaching English to the children in the community is so important;

“ [...] English is a huge thing, because if they ever want to leave their poor community or poor country, to go get a job or anything, then English is a national and important language to know.”

So we teach them how to speak it properly, how to write it properly. This makes it really easy for them to be able to go and get a good job and good education, because they can speak that extra language.”(Interview #29).

The idea presented here is that all cultures want and need to speak English, and in a way English is a valuable commodity, as eventually English will improve the socio-economic status of the people in the community (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016; Jakubiak, 2012). Following the discourse of the tour leader, the English taught by volunteers, without an education background, who only go to the education project for two days, will eventually lead to better jobs for the children in the community and uplift the entire community. Another concept tangible in this example is the idea of need.

Need

An assumption often used in the development discourse of voluntourism organisations is the notion of 'need' (Simpson, 2004). The image and discourse of the 'needy' host community, where his potential only depends on the Global North is popular in aid work, and now as well in voluntourism (Zeddies & Millei, 2015). The communities they are working with are in 'need' of intervention by the west; 'they' need 'our' help. It is questionable how these 'needs' can be met by unskilled, short-term voluntourists. Helping those in 'need' was also expressed as one of the reasons to do volunteer work, as the following quote indicates.

*“[...] I wanted to go somewhere that really **needed** the help. I wanted to be part of a team that is making a difference, so that in years to come hopefully their lives will be improved. To go out in the community, to help those people that **need** it the most.” (Interview #17, my emphasis).*

Another question you can ask within this development discourse of the needy other is who decides what is needed. African Impact works with 'Round Tables' where different important actors from community, including the induna (the mayor) discusses what is needed in the communities (Field notes 17-04-2018). However, do these actors really address the needs of all the community members or only of those who have a strong voice or enough power?

However, the emphasis on helping others who 'need' development suggests that the voluntourists have the power and capacity to provide what the host community 'lacks'. Thus, this discourse repeats the discourses where 'non-western' people are seen as problems which need to be solved or confined (Zeddies & Millei, 2015). There is a particular Otherness sketched by describing the host community as in need for outside intervention. This assumption ignores the reality that while voluntourism 'gives', it is also taking, as the experiences of the authentic 'other' and of 'doing development' are acts of consumption in the voluntourism paradigm. By giving gifts, voluntourists can provide what the host community 'lacks'.

5.3 Giving of gifts

Voluntourists were often associated with giving gifts through the eyes of the host community, this is another example of the local gaze (Maoz, 2006). This idea was very evident during an interview with one of the nurses in Khula clinic;

***“Do you have any questions for me? Could you propose to the manager so that they can take us on a trip? I cannot promise anything** Even if they can invite us for lunch. Maybe for supper. Or a small gift. Because if you go to another country and you do not have any people taking care of you, you will want to go back. [...] Tell the manager maybe after one year, to take us to overseas. African Impact will take us there, just to see. They can even take us to Cape Town. Since you become our friends, you are in good hands here.” (Interview #10)*

The voluntourists are portrayed as being rich and able to give gifts to the host community without asking. However, conflicts emerged when the voluntourists stopped giving gifts. An example of such a conflict was associated with the support group of African Impact. While there used to be 30 participants at the support group, now there were only six (Interview #11). One of the reasons why there are less participants, is because African Impact stopped giving out resources;

"They (the participants of the support group) wanted more parties, they wanted to go to the beach, they wanted chickens and they wanted fences for their homes. That was hard, because if past volunteers or staff was saying Hey Jah we buy you these chickens and then they are not. They were upset of all that stuff. We luckily got past that and got back on the right track." (Interview #11)

Another project of African Impact which was discussable, was the home based care project. In this project, the voluntourists would visit homes of host community members, and hand them a food parcel. The intention of this food parcel was to say 'thank you that we were allowed to visit' (Interview #14), however the costs of these food parcels were an issue, as the following quote indicates;

"Somehow over the years it transformed. It is the first thing we do when we get out the car, is just to give these food parcels. There are times where I think, we do not really need to give out these food parcels. However, it is expected from us. It is expensive, food parcels are very expensive." (Interview #14)

These food parcels included a can of beans, milk, bananas and potatoes, and thus well rounded when it comes to nutrition. However, a lot of the food is wasted, because some community members do not own a fridge and thus cannot store the milk. These food parcels were thus not fit to the local circumstances and practices. This is a good example of how a standardized development discourse, did not fit in the local reality. Besides this, the giving of these food parcels encourages another layer of dependency of the host community on the voluntourists programs, as some of the host community members relied on these food parcels. During the fieldwork, the interns of African Impact were trying to change the way food parcels were implemented, by making them less expensive and a better fit to the local circumstances (Interview #18). Thus African Impact was actively trying to change and polish their programs in order to integrate them better within the local circumstances.

The managers of African Impact, actively discouraged the giving of gifts individually, as this would create false expectations by the host community (Interview #14). If voluntourists wanted to give resources and gifts to the host community, this had to be done via the African Impact foundation. However, some volunteers would rather buy resources directly and give these to the host community, than giving their money to the foundation, as they were skeptical where their money went to (Field notes 17-03-2018).

VESA on the other hand did actively promote the giving of gifts individually. Voluntourists were asked to bring gifts with them from their home country, to distribute during their education project;

"But in the end, it felt like it (the gift) was not making much of a difference. I would have brought maybe different stuff. I brought little cards, but it is just weird because they are walking around barefoot and with scattered clothes." (Interview #33)

Thus a lot of volunteers noted that these gifts were found useless or not fit once they were on the ground. The volunteers receive a list with toys and resources they could bring with them for the education project, however this list was not up to date and some gifts were not applicable to the local circumstances.

5.4 Long-term development goals

Voluntourists are often seeking personal gain, rather than valuable conservation, which according to Henry (2016) is a reason why voluntourism cannot be focussed on long term, sustainable progress. Therefore ‘successful’ projects are often flexible, short and incredibly visible, and do not require specific skills, since they have to be suitable for a big audience. In a lot of voluntourism projects development activities are targeted, focussed on end products. With ROV the entire volunteering program in St Lucia was based on building of schools or crèches. The volunteers can see their immediate result, as they have built a concrete structure. And by painting their name on the structure, they make their impact even personal.

However, according to Simpson (2004), questions around long-term strategies along with questions of appropriateness and the impact of volunteers, appear to be missing within these programs. On the other hand, African Impact did actively engage with questions about long-term development strategies. One of their strategies was the ‘Rural Teacher Training’. Where teachers of the crèches they worked with, received four different trainings, to improve their teaching. The idea behind these trainings was that the teachers have adequate teaching skills even if the volunteers are not around (Interview #7 & Interview #14). However there were some conflicts within the Rural Teacher Training, as not all the teachers of the crèches were participating, this lead to jealousy between the teachers (Field notes 16-03-2018). On the website of African Impact, they actively promote their project achievements, see figure 8 below. Thus African Impact’s indicators of development are the numbers of volunteers on projects, and the amount of hours worked on the projects. The ‘impact’ African Impact makes on the host community can therefore be calculated in simple ways.



FIGURE 6 SCREENSHOT AFRICAN IMPACT, 2018

The crèche built by ROV on the picture below, was not actually in use during the time I visited it, as there were no windows. I visited the crèche prior to the volunteers coming back to St Lucia. Thus, in between the gap that the volunteers of ROV are not present in St Lucia, projects are left unfinished and left behind untouched. Another crèche built, did not even have a roof when the volunteers left. ROV thus left behind two unfinished crèches, and locals were not able to work on them to finish them themselves. Why locals were not able to finish the project whilst the volunteers were not present was not made clear during the fieldwork.



FIGURE 7 CRÈCHES BUILT BY ROV, PERSONAL PICTURES

5.5 Expectation versus reality

During the fieldwork, it became evident that many volunteers had troubles negotiating their expectations of the volunteer work and their actual lived experiences. It is important to understand that voluntourism organisations promotion material influences the volunteers expectations and experiences. Voluntourism organisations often glamorize projects, leading volunteers to develop unrealistic expectations of the projects (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011).

For example, African Impact describes their education project on their website as an “Orphan Day Care and Community Support” however this Orphan Day car has not been used in 5 years by African Impact (Interview #23). Their medical project is described on the website as “Rural medical and HIV/AIDS Awareness”, however since the beginning of this year no HIV/AIDS awareness projects have been given. Volunteers thus came on the field expecting to do certain things, however in real life some of these components were non-existing.

Volunteers at VESA expressed a huge gap between the anticipated amount of volunteer work, and the actual amount of volunteer work done. On paper the volunteers were supposed to do volunteer work from 9 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon, however in reality the volunteers were back at the volunteer house before 2:30. In response to this lack of volunteering and boredom, a drinking culture emerged. When I went to the volunteer house at four in the afternoon, the volunteers were already playing drinking games and spending their money at the liquor store. Every night the volunteers would go out, and come back home way after midnight, having to go on project the next morning at nine. One time a girl was restricted to go to project, because she was still drunk from the night before (Interview #32). This drinking culture was also actively encouraged by the tour guides, as they took the volunteers to the pub after project and bought drinks for the volunteers. In the end the anticipated hard work became a vacation, hardship became play-time. Henry (2016) describes in his article how lack of ownership and authority by the host community, might lead to the volunteers to create their own hours, routines and

expectations. Some expressed that they felt ashamed by this drinking culture; *“There is just such little volunteering. And now I am embarrassed. Because a lot of us fundraised for this trip. People just handed us money to go and get drunk.”* (Interview #32).

Many volunteers expressed disappointment with the impact they were able to make with their volunteer work, as experience prove that practice of development is harder than implied in promotion materials (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). This was also explained by one of the volunteers, who explained that;

“I really thought it was going to get here in St Lucia, we were going to spend a week here. And then I thought we were going to spend a week in Swaziland. I thought it was going to be five-day workweeks, working in Swaziland as well. Like having workweeks and then doing our activities on the weekends. I thought this was supposed to be a volunteer trip, while we have done maybe 30 percent volunteering, 70 percent drinking.” (Interview #32).

5.6 Concluding remarks

To conclude, this chapter has answered the following sub question: How do the voluntourists and the host community perceive the impact of the presented development discourse? A development discourse is a particular way of seeing and doing development. This discourse influences what kind of interventions are being taken and who are involved in these interventions. Voluntourism organisations often imply a neoliberal development discourse, whereby development is being privatized as well as packaged as a marketable commodity. Important elements of the development discourse of voluntourism organisations, is that development can be done without specific skills and development is done for the ‘needy other’. Another element of development discourse are long-term development goals. Voluntourists are often seeking personal gain, rather than valuable sustainable conservation, therefore voluntourism cannot be focussed on the long term. Voluntourism projects are often flexible, short term and incredible visible, and therefore less attention is given to long term development strategies by voluntourism organisations. The last paragraph addressed the expectations versus the reality of the voluntourists. Voluntourism organisations promotion materials influence the volunteer’s expectations, however these expectations often did not fit the reality.

6. Commodification

In this chapter, I elaborate on the commodification of voluntourism. The following research question will be answered; *How is voluntourism being commodified?* This chapter discusses how the voluntourism organisations represent themselves towards their audience. First African Impact is analysed how they portray themselves as a company, and what kind of effect this has for the volunteers and the host community. The second component analyses how ROV and VESA volunteering represent themselves. Finally, the Zulu cultural night is evaluated, by analysing how tourism is motivated by the quest for authenticity.

6.1 Voluntourism as a commodity

As voluntourism grows in popularity, the true value and costs made, are being called into question (Smit & Font, 2014). Voluntourism is a highly marketable commodity, because it combines the moral achievement of ‘making a difference’ with the emotional reward of close encounters with the host community (Cousins et al., 2009). However this could lead to the commodification of indigenous societies and harm their ‘authenticity’ (MacCannell, 1973). Since voluntourism is such a marketable commodity, new profit driven actors have entered the field of voluntourism. Wearing & McGehee (2013) suggests in their article that voluntourism organisations, who are primary profit driven, might have a different impact on the community they are working with, than voluntourism organisations who emerge from NGO’s. As their main focus would be on satisfying their customer, the volunteer, rather than the host community. Voluntourism therefore is a business and is increasingly becoming commodified (McGloin & Geogeu, 2016). However most voluntourism organisations portray themselves as ethical improver of communities and environments regardless of their legal status (Tomazos & Cooper, 2012). There is a big difference in the way the voluntourism organisations present themselves towards the volunteers; African Impact represent themselves as a company, while VESA represents themselves as a NGO and ROV represents themselves as a charity. We will first look at how African Impact represents themselves towards their audience.

6.2 African Impact as a company

During the induction of African Impact, the volunteers are told that African Impact is a company. African Impact being a company did make some volunteers sceptical. At one point African Impact organized a pub quiz in order to fundraise for the support group project, after this evening there was some ambiguity where the money raised actually went, as indicated by a volunteer of African Impact;

“ [...] I believed and I was told, that every single Rand that was made, would go directly into the support group. As it turns out, it was not, it was just a percentage. She (the business manager) did not say what percentage. [...] The foundation takes a percentage. So it is a profit making company, that is not a charity in its true sense. That makes me a little bit skeptical, in fact I am very skeptical.” (Interview #17)

Thus while the volunteers thought the entire amount fundraised would go directly into the support group, in reality a percentage had to go to the foundation of African Impact. Through the African Impact foundation, all the money flows that volunteers have collected and fundraised. African Impact also has side activities, with whom they can earn money. Every Wednesday is merchandise day, where they sell t-shirts, caps and sweaters with the African Impact logo, which you can buy for around €20. Another item sold are bracelets made by Happy Girl, one of the members of the support group. What is compelling about these bracelets is that they had a small tag, which say; ‘an amount of the profit made from this bracelet goes directly to Happy Girl’ (Field notes, 21-03-2018). What happens with the other amount raised, is not clear. Because of this ambiguity, several volunteers, including me, decided to order bracelets directly with Happy Girl, instead of buying them at African Impact.

Working with agencies

African Impact works with over 30 different agencies, from all over the world, to recruit volunteers for the St Lucia project. From the 15 volunteers I have encountered during my fieldwork, seven booked via an agency. One of the volunteers even worked for the Belgian agency WEP (Interview #6). Her motivation to do a volunteer project was, that she wanted to see in person what she was selling to her clients.

One of the reasons African Impact gave for working with agencies, was that for many volunteers it is their first time abroad, and then it is convenient to have an agency who speaks the same language as you (Interview #7). However, a considerable amount of volunteers, including me, did not know they booked via an agency. One volunteer even stated that if she knew she would be volunteering with African Impact, she would not have come (Interview #11). When I booked via KAYA volunteering, I thought I would be volunteering with them, and not with African Impact. Before entering the field I therefore thought there would be more voluntourism projects situated in St Lucia, however when I arrived on the field, there were only three operating. On the websites of the agencies, it looks like they are selling their own voluntourism project, however in real life they are recruiting for the African Impact project. An explanation given by African Impact for this confusion was that; *“It could be marketing. They want you to book again with them, and not with African Impact. They are an agent, their money comes from bookings.”* (Interview #7).

There are compelling differences in price of the volunteer project, whether booked via an agency or directly with African Impact. While the ‘Day Care and Community Support’ project booked via African Impact costs €950 for two weeks (African Impact, 2018), booked via agency GoEco this project costs €1200 (GoEco, 2018) and booked via KAYA this project costs €1285 (KAYA, 2018). Thus, volunteers doing the same project at the same time could be paying different prices. A reason why there are these price differences could be that these agencies need to make a profit (Interview #7).

During the fieldwork, there were three interns working at African Impact, two of them booked via African Impact self, and had to pay €1800, for three months. While the other volunteer booked via her agency, and had to pay €4450 for three months (Field notes, 1-4-2018). These price differences between agencies and African Impact, can be seen as a form of economic commodification (Coren & Gray, 2012), as the activity of voluntourism is seen as a business with the primary goal of making a profit.

Project fee

On the African Impact website they state the following description on how the volunteer fee is used;

“How your volunteer fee is used:

African Impact is proud to have a 10 year track record of facilitating responsible volunteer programs in Africa, providing 24 hour support and guidance for volunteers and offering on-going support to communities in need. Understandably, these operations cost money to run and this is where the volunteer fee comes in.” (African Impact, 2018)

The fact that volunteers have to pay to do volunteer work is already a sign of commodification (Parfitt, 2015). Tomazos & Cooper (2012) argue that voluntourism organisations that are not recognized as not for profit, but portray themselves as organisations or companies, are often anxious to explain why they are making profits and where their profit is going to. These organizations generally claim that they only make an operating profit, which helps them to enable their work. As African Impact claims on their website, they have a duty towards their host communities. Not only provided the website claims why you need to pay to do volunteer work, the African Impact staff also had some ideas about this;

“Why do you have to pay to do volunteer work? Because there are costs involved in volunteering. The way I see it, if I am coming to South Africa to volunteer, but the projects has to pay for my board and accommodation that is taking away from the work that can be done in the community. And projects have to be funded in some way, with staff that are cooking for you. Make sure everything is clean. Then there is the person of the phone who talks to you. So there are costs involved. If organizations are fundraising to cover those costs, we could do less.” (Interview #26)

As the quote above implies, not only are there costs involved in the local community, but also within the head office, based in Cape Town. The covering of these costs need to be legitimized and made clear towards the volunteers. Even though there are fixed expenses linked to the project fee, like the accommodation, food and salaries, African Impact did offer a discount of \$200 or £150 off, for volunteers who joined on a volunteer project in August 2018. This is an example of a marketing stunt or competition to attract more volunteers (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). This discount was available for selected programs only, including the St Lucia project.



FIGURE 8 SCREENSHOT PROJECT FEE OFF, AFRICAN IMPACT 2018

The fact that voluntourists pay for their experience and talking about money may threaten the authenticity of their experience as ‘non-tourists’ (Swan, 2012). Some volunteers did express concerns about where their project fee was going:

“Where do you think the money you have paid goes to? I would like to think it goes to the salaries of the local staff. I like to think it gets ploughed back into resources. [...] Do I believe it goes there? No. Because I am not seeing it at all. I bought a lot out with me. Brought money out with me. It did not take me long to realize I was not going to give them the money, because it does not go directly into buying the resources.” (Interview #17)

African Impact as a ‘tour operator’?

Within the debate on voluntourism, the tourism component for these international volunteers is often of significance (Daldeniz & Hampton, 2010). This tourism component was also present within the voluntourism organization in St Lucia. In the first week, the new volunteers spend a whole evening on the touristic things you can do in and around St Lucia. The business manager and volunteer coordinator prepared a slide show, with all the different things you can do, including a hippo and crock tour, a night safari and a Zulu cultural night. Intriguing was the fact that if you booked via African Impact, the prices were always higher, than if you booked directly with the tour operator in St Lucia (Field notes, 13-03-2018). For example if you booked the Hippo and Crock tour with African Impact, you paid 300 Rand, while booking directly with the tour operator you only paid 220 Rand. The fact that African Impact

asked a higher price for the tours they booked, indicates that they make a profit over the tours they supply, and thus are a profit making company. Some volunteers have therefore described African Impact as working like a ‘tour operator’ (Interview #13). On the website of African Impact, there is a lot of emphasis on the touristic aspects of St Lucia, as the quote below indicates;

“St Lucia, Zululand, is a coastal paradise in South Africa, warm all year round, home to the largest population of hippos and crocodiles in the country and wildlife around every corner. Imagine waking up with monkeys rummaging through your breakfast cereals, spotting hippos dipping in the river before lunch and spending your evening under the stars, on a night safari drive through some of the most infamous Game Reserves in Africa and spotting everything from leopards to hyenas!” (African Impact, 2018)

Describing St Lucia as a coastal paradise creates an incredible positive image of St Lucia, which volunteers need to see. Some volunteers in fact stated that they had chosen for St Lucia, because of the excellent climate (Interview #13). Not only does African Impact emphasize the tourism aspect on their website, they also place a lot of attention on the responsible tourism awards and prizes they have won for their projects (African Impact, 2018). However, some volunteers have questioned these prizes, as they are all focussed on tourism;

“Yes they are a great tour operator as they pick you from the airport, have all kinds of tours which they can book for you. But if you look at the poster at the resource room, all the prizes they have won have nothing to do with development.” (Field notes, 25-03-2018)

Tomazos & Cooper (2012) argue that the main tourism model of packaging and segmentation is now used in voluntourism, because of its popularity and success. By offering packages, the complex activities of development can be performed within a matter of days, as part of an adventure experience (McGloin & Georgeou, 2016). Package tourism is a form of ‘comfortable adventure’, where you can travel in the ‘wild’, while keeping the ‘wilderness’ at arm’s length (van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). Both ROV and VESA offer packaged pre-arranged voluntourism trips, including both volunteering as well as tourism. Volunteers addressed that some of them choose for VESA because the project seemed the most inclusive and therefore it seemed the best bargain (Interview #33). In the following paragraph it will be discussed how VESA and ROV portray themselves towards their audience.

6.3 VESA as a NGO and ROV as a charity

Being a non-profit or charitable organization can be of great value for the image and brand of the organization (Tomazon & Cooper, 2011). VESA and ROV present themselves as a NGO and charity. During an interview with the founder of ROV, she told me why the organization had become a charity;

*“We have always wanted to become a charity. We kind of started off as an organization to build our way up. Essentially, with the registered charity, we first became a charity that was tax adoptable for volunteers. [...] What that means is that they can claim back part of their money they have spent on doing the project. And there was the **reason for legitimacy, being a proper charity is quite important.**”* (Interview #34).

Being a charity implies that the volunteers can get a certain amount of tax back from the government, which they have spent on the voluntourism project. For example when a volunteer spends €1000 on a project, and their marginalized tax is 33%, they can claim €330 back (Interview #34). This can be an important tipping point for volunteers to participate in a volunteer project. Another factor addressed by the founder of ROV, is that being a charity legitimizes the existence of the voluntourism project.

During the interview with the head team leader of VESA, she told me that VESA is a NGO;

“We tell everybody, it is a Non Governmental Organization. If we say it is an NGO, it means that the government does not pay VESA. So the only way for VESA to run, is through volunteers, which is amazing. Because if volunteers actually pay the money to come on this trip they actually know where their money is going.” (Interview #29)

What the technical features behind being an NGO are was not clear. Further information could not be found on the website of VESA either. VESA promotes fundraising as a way for volunteers to make sure they do not pay everything out of their own pocket (Interview #29). VESA sends the volunteers a government document which states that they are legally allowed to fundraise for VESA. According to the team leader of VESA, fundraising is not only important for the volunteer, but also for their environment. *“Because when people are donating to the volunteers as well, they need to feel like they are making a difference as well”* (Interview #29). Thus volunteering is portrayed as a two-fold process, where the host community benefits, but also the community of the volunteers self.

6.4 Zulu cultural night

Cultural commodification according to Coren & Gray (2012) is the construction of difference, which is created through the trivialization of cultural ceremonies. In particular ‘colourful’ and exotic local costumes, rituals and feasts become touristic services or commodities, as they are being performed for the consumption of tourists (Cohen, 1988). An example of a performance performed only for tourists, that all the three voluntourism programmes encountered, was the Zulu Cultural Night. With VESA and ROV this night was included in the price, and with African Impact you could book it via the company for 200 rand. This Zulu Cultural night was promoted by the voluntourism organisations as a way to experience ‘real’ Zulu culture, and understand their customs and beliefs (Field notes, 18-03-2018).

I accompanied three volunteers of African Impact to the Zulu Cultural night. How the evening looked like is described below in the vignette.

We arrived a bit late at the cultural village, ‘African Time’, and when we entered the reception, our guide was already waiting for us. Our guide looked entirely western; wearing pants, a watch and a t-shirt with an American motive.

She guided us to the village behind the reception, and told us that we had to say ‘we are visitors’ in Zulu, in order to enter the village. After failing a couple of times, we eventually managed to say the words in Zulu. A man on bear feet, wearing pieces of fur around his head and body, entered the gate for us. He was obviously wearing ‘traditional’ style clothing. All the houses in the village were mud houses with straw roofs. We had seen some of these houses in the communities we are working in.

We arrived at one hut, where a woman was sitting on a mat surrounded by dresses and skirts made out of beads. Our guide told us that we were allowed to wear these ‘traditional’ skirts. I was dressed in a red and blue skirt, headband and necklace. When every volunteer was dressed in a different colour, we had to take an extensive photoshoot in front of the hut. While still wearing our skirts and necklaces, we walked over to the next hut, where we encountered an unmarried girl. She was topless, and only wearing the traditional skirt, headband and necklace. I could feel that the volunteers were a bit uncomfortable around the topless girl, but tried to hide this feeling, to show respect

The last hut we entered was the chief’s hut. This was the biggest hut in the village. In the corner there were two women sitting, both wearing the traditional skirts. What was striking was the fact that the women were both wearing a white t-shirt with a huge Adidas logo.

After we left the Chief's hut, we went to a 'kraal' where there would be a dancing performance. A group of eight, both men and women, performed three different dances, all wearing 'traditional' clothing. In the second dance, we were allowed to join. One at a time had to do a freestyle dance with high legs, which was a common dance move. I felt very uncomfortable and awkward performing this dance, and so did the volunteers. During the last dance one of the men put down his shield in front of us, and we were expected to give them a tip. We all handed in 10 rand each. I am not sure if that was enough.



FIGURE 9 VOLUNTEERS WEARING 'TRADITIONAL' CLOTHING, PERSONAL PICTURE

VIGNETTE 3 ZULU CULTURAL NIGHT ADOPTED FROM FIELD NOTES ON 21-03-2018

Tourism is motivated by the quest and demand for authenticity according to MacCannell (1973). This quest for authenticity is evident in the promotion of the Zulu Cultural Night by the voluntourism organisations to come and see the 'real' Zulu culture, and try to enter the 'backstage'. However what is being shown to tourists is not the 'backstage', rather it is a staged back region according to MacCannell (1973). While touristic settings are often not replicas of real-life situation, they are copies that are supposed to present the 'authentic' setting. When one of the volunteers asked at the end of the night if there were still Zulu people living like this, the tour guide admitted that no one lived like this anymore. Thus the cultural village was not a setting of actual lived life, mere a historical setting and constructing the memory of Zulu culture.

Cole (2007) states that when culture is defined as an object of tourism, its authenticity is reduced. This Zulu Cultural Night was a performance, specially made for tourists. The eight dancers worked for the cultural village, and only performed for tourists. There are several indicators during this night why this is a form of cultural commodification (Coren & Gray, 2012). The clothing the volunteers were put on, were seen by them as authentic, as they were hand made by local people according to tradition (MacCannell, 1973). Even though the beads were now from plastic, and not from stones as in the olden days, they were still perceived as authentic. Another element of the authentic experience was that the volunteers were allowed to dance with the dancers. Even though they felt really uncomfortable throwing their legs in the air, they did feel like they were part of the performance. However this authenticity could rather be described as "staged authenticity", where the local community put their culture on sale in order

to create an appealing package for tourists (Chhabra et al., 2003). You have to pay to enter the cultural village, and you were expected to give a tip to the tour guide and performers.

6.5 Concluding remarks

To conclude, this chapter has answered the third sub question: How is voluntourism being commodified? This chapter first looked at the way the voluntourism organisations present themselves. There is a big difference in the way the voluntourism organisations present themselves towards the volunteers; African Impact represent themselves as a company, while VESA represents themselves as a NGO and ROV represents themselves as a charity. The way a voluntourism organisation present, themselves towards their audience can have a big influence on the image and legitimacy of the organisation. This chapter analysed African Impact in more depth by emphasizing how African Impact receives their volunteers by using agencies, the way their project fee is used, an whether African Impact is a ‘tour operator’. The last paragraph of the chapter analysed a Zulu Cultural Night, which has been visited by all the three voluntourism organisations, by analysing how tourism is motivated for the quest for ‘authenticity’.

7. Discussion

In this chapter, I will address a critical discussion where the results discussed above, will be interpreted into a wider discussion. This wider discussion is important, to highlight how the theoretical framework discussed previously is connected to social relevant discussions and contradictions on voluntourism and tourism in general. Several ideas and theories of authors not yet discussed in the previous chapters will be linked to the concept of voluntourism. These ideas and theories include disaster capitalism by Klein (2007), Philanthrocapitalism and the tourist bubble. Besides this, the critical reflections of the volunteers and the voluntourism organisations are discussed. Lastly, the role of the researcher will be reflected upon.

7.1 Voluntourism under contemporary types of commodification

Voluntourism as disaster capitalism?

Since tourism is a capitalist practice and has an important role in sustaining and expanding global capitalism, the global tourism industry can be seen as a form of disaster capitalism (Fletcher, 2018). New products for tourist marketing are developed, derived from the problems that might be caused by capitalist development. One of these new products is voluntourism.

Therefore, the question arises whether voluntourism is a form of disaster capitalism. There are several reasons why voluntourism can be seen as a form of disaster capitalism. The first reason is that voluntourism often does not challenge the pre-existing views on the host community, but reinforces them (Swan, 2012), resulting in a process where a form of othering is implied. Thus images of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ are not contested, and therefore the relationship between the included and excluded, and the protected and damned, do not change. These static relationships are one of the key results of disaster capitalism. A second reason why voluntourism can be seen as a form of disaster capitalism is that underdevelopment of the other is seen as something that can be commodified (Rolfes, 2010). Thus, you can make a profit out of poor people, and these people are a unique selling point in marketing. In the end, the idea of helping these poor people is sold on the market. A third reason why voluntourism is a form of disaster capitalism, is that voluntourism organisations are often for profit companies, and have no connections to the state. In the case of St Lucia, African Impact openly presented themselves as a company, where a certain amount of the project fee paid went to the company. Fletcher (2018) proposes that in many projects the money paid is most desired as a key source of funding. To make sure the voluntourists do not feel useless, they are offered tasks that are at least not damaging the work in question. Thus the crisis of poverty, marginalisation and need for help, is thus tackled by market based mechanisms, that might have started this crisis. It is essential that this crisis continues, otherwise the voluntourism organisations no longer have a market and cannot sell their product. Therefore, I argue that voluntourism can be seen as a form of disaster capitalism.

Voluntourism as Philanthrocapitalism?

Two of the volunteers I encountered during the fieldwork, won their volunteer trip with African Impact as an award with their company. This prize included a two-week education volunteer project and the flight ticket from Norway to South Africa. The company they work with in Norway organizes an award every year for the best leader, and the best young leader. When I asked why you always win a volunteer trip, the volunteer stated that;

“Because [when] being a manager, it is important to be safe in who you are. And if I feel good about myself and I know who I am, I am going to be a good leader. I think volunteering can help us with understanding and giving perspective. Also we make our staff understand too. It is a really good prize for self-development and help the company grow.”(Interview #15)

Thus the eventual idea behind giving a volunteer trip as an award, is for self-development and for the company to grow, therefore I imply that this is a form of Philanthrocapitalism. Philanthrocapitalism implies that a subject (the volunteer) undertakes philanthropy, which is designed to achieve socio-economic mobility of the host community accompanied by long term improvements, but only under the condition that there are direct economic benefits and gains by doing so (Tomazos & Cooper, 2016; Diallo, 2015). The origin of Philanthrocapitalism lies with rich and famous people who gained their capital via the market, like Bill Gates, lining up to promote the paradigm of philanthropy, as “love for human kind”, but combine this with the same mechanisms of how they gained their fortune (Edwards, 2008). Their interest in philanthropy is fuelled by the belief that their success in business equips them in making a similar impact on social change (Edwards, 2008). Philanthrocapitalism therefore flows out of the concept of philanthropy, which refers to the universal goodwill towards human beings, and the active promotion and advocacy of social welfare on a global level (Novelli et al., 2016). However, Philanthrocapitalism adds market based mechanism to this philanthropy and the secrets behind moneymaking successes are employed to achieve social change and welfare (Diallo, 2015). According to Edwards (2008), Philanthrocapitalism is characterized by three distinguishing features; the first it contains large sums of money addressed to philanthropy, which are often the result of profits earned in the finance or IT sector. Secondly, it is based on the belief that methods from business can solve social problems better than other methods used in the public sector. Thirdly, it is based upon the claim that these methods can achieve transformation in society.

Thus, in the end while the winners of the awards, volunteer in the host community and ‘help’ them, these winners will develop themselves, which will eventually lead to economic benefits for the company. Therefore, the language of poverty alleviation and the idea of saving lives frame Philanthrocapitalism. Wilson (2014a) argues that Philanthrocapitalism mobilises a specific *jouissance*, in which ‘we’ are invited to observe and enjoy the view of global inequality. *Jouissance* is a form of enjoyment, but this enjoyment is related to pain, disgust and horrified fascination. Novelli et al. (2016) criticize Philanthrocapitalism, since it associates pleasurable activities with acts of commoditizing poverty and underdevelopment, by subjecting them to the voyeuristic and patronizing gaze of tourist, in this case voluntourists. In St Lucia the volunteers got the opportunities to enter people’s houses to clean them, and observe and experience how these people live in poor conditions, with the end idea that would become better persons by doing so. Whilst the winners are awarded for their work in the Western consumer culture, they get to gaze upon the poverty and suffering of ‘authentic Africa’ in the form of volunteering.

7.2 Bursting the tourist bubble?

For many voluntourists it is extremely important to argue that they are different compared to ‘regular’ tourists. However, based upon my research, I argue that voluntourists have practically the same ‘tourist bubble’ as regular tourists. Regular tourists are often said to travel in a ‘tourist bubble’ that manages everything for them, from stay, well-being, to their safe return home, and isolates them from important political aspects of their destination (Carrier & Macloe, 2005; van Beek & Schmidt, 2012). According to Büscher & Fletcher (2017) the most important function of the tourist bubble is to escape normal life, and therefore ‘normal’ rules do not apply anymore and political issues should not disturb the tourist experience.

There are several reasons why voluntourists have the same tourist bubble as ‘regular’ tourists. First, the voluntourists in St Lucia all had their accommodation on the main street, some even slept in a backpackers hostel together with regular tourists. The voluntourists thus did not live with the host community they worked with, and their accommodation was of higher quality than the housing of most of the host community. Therefore, their stay in St Lucia had the same standards as (backpacker) tourists.

Secondly, all the volunteers were picked up from the airport and brought back at the end of their stay, to ensure a safe return home. With African Impact, every second Sunday one of the staff members drove to Durban Airport with a big striking sign saying ‘African Impact’, so the volunteers would recognize the organization immediately and did not have to feel scared to land in a different country without someone catching them. Another way, in which the safety of the volunteers was ensured, was that the volunteers were restricted from entering the communities without supervision, because the voluntourism company saw the communities as unsafe for the volunteers individually. Entering the communities at night was out of question and during the day, the local staff had to accompany the volunteers. Thirdly, many voluntourists hardly had any background knowledge about the country they were working in, and thus were isolated from political issues that might disturb their tourist experience. African Impact did give a short presentation on apartheid in South Africa, however they only scratched the surface of the underlying problems, and made it look like apartheid was a thing from the past (Field notes, 23-3-2018).

All of these measurements made by the voluntourists organizations ensured the voluntourists lived in a relatively safe and organized tourist bubble. The only time the voluntourists leave their regular ‘tourist bubble’ is when they go to the communities a couple of hours a day to ‘work’. However, this ‘work’ sometimes took the form of a well-organized field excursion. For example, when the volunteers of VESA had their conservation day, they were picked up by a mini bus in the morning, and driven to the crocodile center, which was 1.5 kilometers away. At the crocodile center, they first had an extensive tour through the center, where after they built three benches, under the guidance of a volunteer coordinator and a crocodile center employee. After their working day, the volunteers were picked up again by the mini bus, and dropped at the local bar. The fact that there cannot be made a severe distinction between the regular tourists and voluntourists in relation to their tourist bubble, might further form a barrier for voluntourists to enter the ‘back region’ of the host community. As the proposed ‘deep relations’ with the host community, might in fact be as shallow as the relationship tourists have with the host community.

7.3 Critical reflections by volunteers and organisations

A lot of volunteers and voluntourism organisations do not have enough knowledge about the development discourses linked to tourism. Since they lack this knowledge, they cannot critically engage with practical implications of development yet. On the website of African Impact, they imply the below statement;

“Volunteer tourism, or ‘voluntourism’ as it is popularly known, is loosely defined as a holiday in which you give back to the land you are visiting; contributing to either community development or conservation. But it’s so much more than that. Voluntourism encompasses a new trend of responsible tourism, where travellers are making informed and responsible choices and planning trips which don’t negatively affect the country or communities they are visiting. When volunteering, it is critical that travellers choose a volunteer organisation or charity with a proven ethos and philosophy around sustainable and responsible tourism practices.” (African Impact, 2018).

What is engaging about this statement is that they make use of the definition ‘voluntourism’. Voluntourism is a definition mainly used by academic scholars only and not so often used by the voluntourism organisations themselves in the popular media. This statement therefore indicates that African Impact has been critically looking into practices and theories imposed by scholars who have studied tourism and voluntourism and adapts this to their development discourse.

Recently, voluntourism has been substantially criticized in academics and in popular media, among others by the author J. K. Rowling, who called voluntourism ‘one of the drivers of family breakups in very poor countries’ and it incentivizes ‘orphanages that are run as businesses’ (Oppenheim, 2016). While some voluntourism organizations do not react to this criticism, African Impact does. The organization published an article on their website where they critically reflect on this topic. The following quote is from this article.

“We understand the generalizations made about the volunteer tourism industry. Volunteers are often portrayed as naïve college students, drawn by images and do-good messaging, often with a very serious case of ‘White Saviour Complex’. Yet we find that our volunteers are savvy, culturally-aware, and thorough researchers, who have an enormous range of initiatives to choose from. It also has nothing to do with age, either, as we host volunteers of all ages – all who are eager to make a difference and capable of researching what good and bad volunteering looks like.” (African Impact, 2018)

Again, this quote is a good example of how African Impact has critically engaged with theories on voluntourism proposed by scholars, by using the concept of ‘White Saviour Complex’, which is a concept, proposed by anthropologists to highlight the unequal relationship between host and guest. However, I do not fully agree with this statement. All, except three, of the volunteers I encountered with African Impact were under the age of 21. Several of the volunteers were on a gap year, between high school and university, and thus some were barely 18. Moreover, as I have already highlighted above, most of the volunteers were unaware of political and historical processes in South Africa, like apartheid and colonialism, and therefore the statement that volunteers are culturally aware is questionable. Most of the people reading the website of African Impact are existing or potential clients, on whom African Impact depends upon to survive. Therefore describing the volunteers in a positive day light is essential for their existence. Another quote from the article on the African Impact website states;

*“What JK Rowling and the many articles that criticize volunteering abroad are not addressing, is that when done **right**, volunteering abroad has the power to transform communities for the better. With every such piece that is published, potential volunteers are discouraged to give their time, and the potential for positive change is greatly diminished.” (African Impact, 2018, my italics).*

However, what ‘good’ or ‘right’ volunteering looks like and what kind of activities this involves, is not being made clear in this quote. ‘Good’ volunteering might not be the same for everyone in the host community, as there are different power relations between the hosts and guests and within the host community. In order to cope with this ambiguity of ‘good’ voluntourism, volunteers should be more critical of their own decisions and question labels like ‘teacher’ and ‘expert’ when there is need for actual education or medical background (Pastran, 2014).

Since volunteers are critically limited engaged, they confirm rather than challenge what they already know (Simpson, 2004). A poor but happy interpretation or that luck is the explanation for inequality, which are both part of othering, thus remains dominant. Poverty therefore is in a way is being romanticized. However, romantic images abolish cultural complexities and compress people into a happy whole (Jakubiak & Smagorinsky, 2016). Poverty can be a problematic term to deal with for volunteer tourists, and can create distance and separation between the voluntourists and the host community. Crossley (2012) states in his article that while the volunteers come from a culture that celebrates materialism and consumption, poverty is the opposite and signifies lack, failure and otherness. Thus, by not critically engaging with their work, the voluntourists are reproducing a sense of distance and separation from the ‘other’ by implying a poor but happy interpretation of the third world (Simpson,

2004). This uncritically engaging with their work, can be related to the apolitical character of the tourist bubble described above. When political issues enter the volunteering sphere, this could be an eyesore for the tourist experience, and therefore these political issues should be avoided.

7.4 Whiteness and role of researcher

Henry (2018) states that tourism studies has been slow to connect cultural politics of racism with voluntourism. He argues that tourism scholars would gain from engaging with critical race theory in order to better understand how voluntourism operates within a predominantly white audience. While voluntourism organisations may not formally exclude non-white participants (Cheung Judge, 2017), this overrepresentation of whites does indicate a form of everyday racism (Henry 2018). According to Cheung Judge (2017), the vast majority of voluntourists are privileged. Because they are globally mobile, have wealth and have the power to extract resources from travels to developing countries. Swan (2012) notes in her article that the presence of volunteers often reminded the host community of their own subject position of Africans within a globalised but often unequal world. According to Swan, Africans have been forced to realise that with white skin, comes all kinds of advantages. This might explain the assumption that simply because the volunteers are white, the volunteers can work in any field without background knowledge or experience.

This white audience was also very clear in St Lucia, as almost all the volunteers I encountered with African Impact and VESA were white. Many European volunteers stated that this experience was the first time they were really aware of their race and of them being white (Field notes, 12-04-2018). Addressing issues of race within voluntourism is specifically important in the context of South Africa and the apartheid history. Overall tourism is a very white industry in South Africa, and this is the same for voluntourism.

As a researcher, you should also critically reflect on your own role in the field. I would consider myself a privileged, white female. The fact that I have the resources to conduct my fieldwork in South Africa, and fill up my backpack with bracelets made by 'Happy Girl', confirms this privilege. The whiteness of volunteers did raise some expectations by the host community. Many volunteers complained that the host community saw them as 'walking wallets', while in fact they were just 'poor students' (Field notes, 13-04-2018). Thus, the volunteers were seen as potential vehicles for a better life in the West (Swan, 2012). Swan (2012) elaborates in her article how the presence of volunteers for the host community, reminded them of other differences; those of black and white, rich and poor. These differences made an immediate divide between 'guests' and 'hosts'. That volunteers were often being reminded of their whiteness, is in stark contrast to 'home' (Henry, 2018), where people often (un)consciously avoid racism.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has studied the host-guest interactions within voluntourism in St Lucia, South Africa. In order to analyse this interaction, three overarching concepts have been used; othering, development discourse and commodification. The notion of authenticity is also of noticeable importance, and is interwoven with all the three concepts. The aim of this thesis was answering the following research question;

How do othering and commodification affect host-guest perspectives on each other and on the development discourse in social voluntourism projects in St Lucia, South Africa?

The thesis has shown that the voluntourists and the host community have several perspectives on each other. One perspective that voluntourists have on the host community, is a poor but happy interpretation of the third world. This interpretation is alarming because two worlds are created, which can never be an equivalent. There are unequal relations between the two worlds, which are kept in place via the way the people are represented.

Another perspective implemented by voluntourism organisations on the volunteers, is that by doing volunteer work you are entering the ‘back region’ of the host community. However, this thesis implies that this is actually not the case; as deep connections need time, and enough time is something volunteers do not have. Secondly, there is always a language barrier, which can form a barrier to close interaction. Thirdly, the volunteer are staying in St Lucia, and not in the surrounding communities, and thus are separated from the host community for the majority of their time.

There is also a case of local gaze, which is the way the host community perceive the voluntourists. Voluntourists were often perceived as doctors or potential lovers. In both cases, the voluntourists are being romanticized by the host community and seen as a way to enter Europe or America. Photography is used by the voluntourists to capture their notions of the host community and the way they perceive them. The people on these photos crystalized the voluntourists images of South Africa, and thus represent the ‘authentic’ Africa. . It is thus important to notice that not only the volunteers have several perspectives upon the host community, but also the other way around. The host community are not passive recipients, but active actors with agency. However the host community is being commodified by the voluntourists, and thus in a sense a product, but living products who are commodified.

Voluntourism projects create a publicly accepted ‘methodology’ of doing development, by using a particular development discourse. This development discourse is often neoliberal, in a way that development is being privatized as well as packaged as a marketable commodity. Voluntourism organisations promote themselves as agencies of development, in order to trade the idea that they send people to ‘help’ others in dire need of assistance. However, in the language they use on their websites and promotion materials, the word development is rarely used. ‘Development’ is thus being opened up for “everyone”, and as something that can be done and bought, and therefore development is being simplified. Whether development is opened up for “everyone” is debatable, since only the privilege can afford doing voluntourism.

Important elements of this development discourse is that development can be done without specific skills and development is done for the ‘needy other’. Voluntourism organisations are often not focussed on the long term, and therefore their projects are flexible, short and very concrete and tangible, like the construction of a school or crèche. Voluntourism organisations operate in such a way because these projects need to appeal to a broad audience and voluntourists are often seeking personal gain rather than valuable sustainability. The development discourse used by voluntourism organisations in theory often does not fit the actual lived experiences of the voluntourists. Which lead to frustration with the

volunteers, and sometimes the emergence of a drinking culture, since they had so much free time. Therefore, this thesis states that the development discourse used within voluntourism, promotes that unskilled but enthusiastic volunteers can do development and the development discourse used by voluntourism organisations often does not fit the reality.

Since voluntourism organisations use a neoliberal development discourse, voluntourism is a highly marketable commodity. This is so, because it combines the moral achievement of ‘making a difference’ with the emotional reward of close encounters with the host community. Since voluntourism is such a marketable commodity, new profit driven actors have entered the field of voluntourism.

There is a big difference in the way the voluntourism organisations present themselves towards the volunteers; African Impact represent themselves as a company, while VESA represents themselves as a NGO and ROV represents themselves as a charity. The way a voluntourism organisation represent themselves, has a lot of influence on the legitimization by the volunteers on the organisation. African Impact works with agencies to recruit volunteers for their projects, however there is a price difference when you book via an agency and when you book directly with African Impact. These price differences can be seen as a form of economic commodification. Within the debate on voluntourism, the tourism component for these international volunteers is often of significance. This tourism component was also present within the voluntourism organization in St Lucia. The main tourism model of packaging and segmentation is now used in the voluntourism organisations ROV and VESA, because of its popularity and success. By offering packages, the complex activities of development can be performed within a matter of days, as part of an adventure experience.

This thesis proves that the divide between a company and NGO is paper-thin. Despite some price differences, it does not matter anymore these days whether you do development through a company, clearly for-profit or through non-profits such as NGO’s or charities. All three of the voluntourism organisations seemed to be working in the same commercial system, based on market mechanisms and aimed for profit, by using different kinds of marketing techniques to attract clients. Poverty and socio-economic inequality are all necessities in order for these organisations to survive and make money. If poverty and inequality are necessities for these organisations, you can question whether these organisations do ‘development’ at all, or only further worsen the conditions of poverty and inequality.

You can question what this says about situation of international development in general and the way it operates. Is the best way to do international development, by applying market mechanisms, as promoted by Philanthrocapitalism? Or will this application of economic market mechanism, or disaster capitalism as Klein (2007) calls it, only spark the crisis of poverty and inequality? Both othering and commodification, and the way the host and their guests perceive each other are important elements in this process, and therefore my central question relates to this process of development being shaped by market mechanisms. There is thus enough room for discussion and for further research on voluntourism and the way it is shaped by market mechanisms.

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Appendix I – Overview semi-structured interviews

	Function	Organisation	Gender	Nationality	Date	Location
1.	Tour leader	ROV	Male	South African	28-02-2018	Khula
2.	Volunteer	AI	Male	Dutch	28-02-2018	St Lucia
3.	Volunteer	AI	Male	Dutch	06-03-2018	St Lucia
4.	Volunteer	AI	Female	English	06-03-2018	St Lucia
5.	Volunteer	AI	Female	English	06-03-2018	St Lucia
6.	Volunteer/Agent	AI	Female	Belgian	08-03-2018	St Lucia
7.	Volunteer manager	AI	Female	Dutch	25-03-2018	St Lucia
8.	Physiotherapist	-	Female	South African	26-03-2018	Mtubatuba
9.	Nurse clinic	-	Female	South African	27-03-2018	Khula
10.	Nurse clinic	-	Male	South African	28-03-2018	Khula
11.	Volunteer	AI	Female	American	29-03-2018	St Lucia
12.	Community coordinator	AI	Female	South African	29-03-2018	St Lucia
13.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Norway	03-04-2018	St Lucia
14.	Business manager	AI	Female	American	04-04-2018	St Lucia
15.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Norway	05-04-2018	St Lucia
16.	Medical coordinator	AI	Female	South African	06-04-2018	St Lucia
17.	Volunteer	AI	Female	English	07-04-2018	St Lucia
18.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Belgian	10-04-2018	St Lucia
19.	Business owner	-	Male	South African	12-04-2018	St Lucia
20.	Tourism manager	-	Female	English	13-04-2018	Ezwehini
21.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Dutch	15-04-2018	Ezwehini

22.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Dutch	15-04-2018	Ezwelini
23.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Belgian	18-04-2018	St Lucia
24.	Business owner	-	Female	South African	19-04-2018	St Lucia
25.	Manager at crocodile centre	VESA	Male	South African	21-04-2018	St Lucia
26.	Staff at head office	AI	Female	Canadian	22-04-2018	St Lucia
27.	Academy volunteer	AI	Female	Canadian	23-04-2018	St Lucia
28.	Volunteer	AI	Female	Belgian	15-05-2018	St Lucia
29.	Tour leader	VESA	Female	Canadian	18-05-2018	St Lucia
30.	Volunteer	AI	Female	English	19-05-2018	St Lucia
31.	Volunteer	VESA	Female	American & Canadian	22-05-2018	St Lucia
32.	Volunteer	VESA	Female	American	23-05-2018	St Lucia
33.	Volunteer	VESA	Female	American & Canadian	23-05-2018	St Lucia
34.	Founder of organisation	ROV	Female	Australian	25-05-2018	St Lucia

Appendix II – Topic list

1. Volunteer projects

- Could you shortly describe what kind of organisation this is?
- Could you shortly describe what the project is and what the volunteers do?
- Why is the project situated in St Lucia?

Development discourse

- Do the volunteers get a training before they leave to South Africa?
- In what countries does the organisation have projects?
- Do the volunteers need any skills to do this project?

Commodification

- Why do the volunteers pay a fee? How high is it and for what is it eventually used?
- Do you make a profit by sending volunteers to St Lucia?
- Is the head office of the organisation situated in a western country or in South Africa itself?

2. Volunteers.

- Introduce yourself; name, age, nationality, studies
- How long are you doing the volunteer project?
- Why did you choose to do a volunteer project?
- What are your motivations to do volunteer work?
- What do you eventually want to gain by doing this volunteer project?
- Why did you choose for St Lucia, South Africa?
- Have you done volunteer work before?
- Where there any skill requirements to do this project?

Host guest perspectives:

- How were your thoughts about South Africa before you came here? Have these thoughts changed?
- How were your thoughts on the people living in St Lucia before you came here? Have these thoughts changed?
- Are the people living in St Lucia, the same as you had expected?
- Do you think the presence of the volunteers change and impact the way of life in the host community?

Development outcomes:

- Why did you choose for this project specifically?
- How do you like to volunteer work so far? What do you like and what don't you like? What would you change in the project?
- Is the project the same as you had expected? What is different?
- What has been your toughest experience so far?
- Do you think your volunteer work will still affect the local community in 20 years?
- How do you perceive the poverty in St Lucia?

Commoditization:

- How much did you pay to do this project?
- Do you think this is a good value for money?
- Why do you think you have to pay this fee to do this project?
- Where do you think the fee goes to?
- How do you like the place you are staying during your volunteer time?
- Do you think the local community will have economic benefits from this project?

3. Host community

- Introduce yourself: name, age, job.
- What is your relationship with the volunteer project and the volunteers?
- Why did you choose to work with these volunteer projects?
- Do you think the volunteers need any skills to do this project?

Host guest perspectives:

- Could you explain me what the volunteers are doing?
- What do you like about the volunteer project? What don't you like about the volunteer project?
- What kind of people are these volunteers? Why do you think they come here to do volunteer work?
- Does the presence of the volunteers change and impact the way of life in the host community?

Development outcomes:

- Do you like what the volunteers are doing? What have they accomplished so far?
- Is the project the same as you had expected?
- Why do you think there is a volunteer project in St Lucia?
- Do you think the volunteer work will still affect the local community in 20 years?
- What did you expect from the volunteers? Have they reached this expectation?

Commoditization:

- Why do you think the volunteers pay fees to do this project?
- Where do you think the fees go to?
- Do you think this is a good value of money?
- What do you think about the way the volunteers are accommodated?

